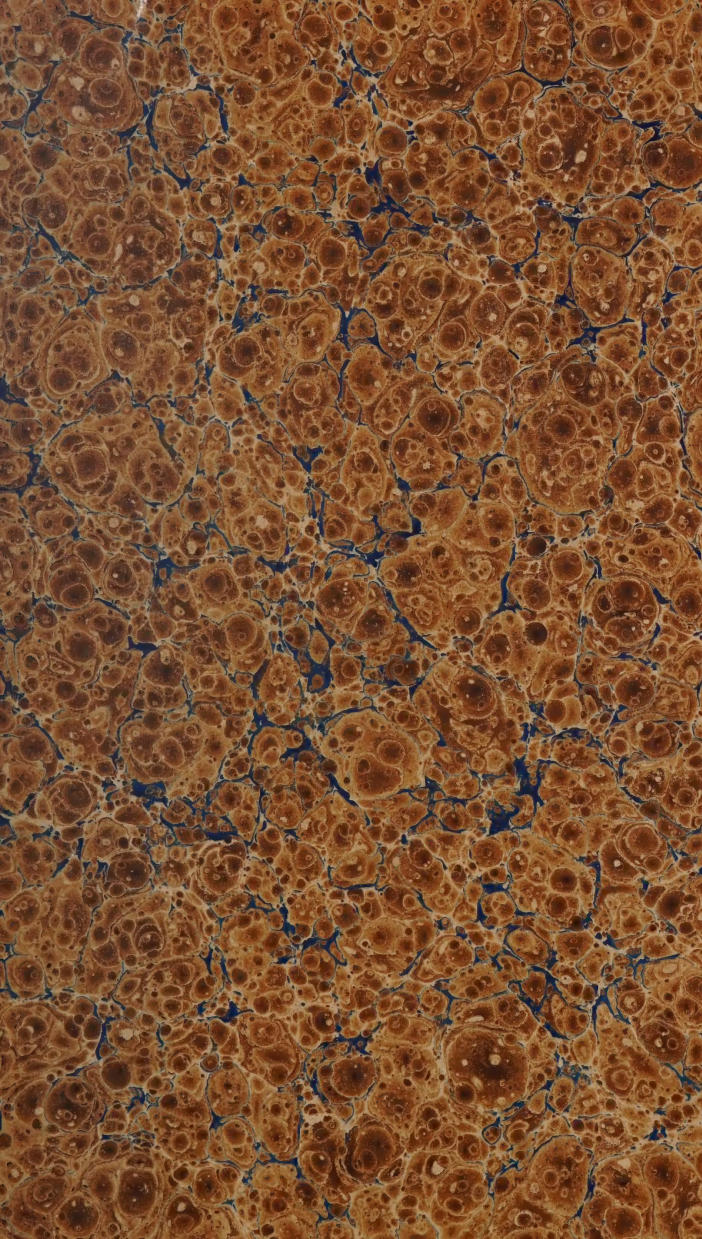


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An essay on the salvation
of all dying in infancy



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ESSAY

THE SALVATION OF ALL DYING IN INFANCY:

RELATIVE

TO THE STATE OF THE ABANDONED

AND

CHRISTIAN DISPENSATIONS.

BY

DAVID RUSSELL,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, &c.

IN A LETTER

TO THE

MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL, AND OTHERS,

IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND IN THE

WEST INDIES.

LONDON:

1833.



AN
ESSAY
ON
THE SALVATION
OF ALL DYING IN INFANCY :
INCLUDING
HINTS ON THE ADAMIC
AND
CHRISTIAN DISPENSATIONS.

By DAVID RUSSELL,

Minister of the Gospel, Dundee.

Edinburgh :

PRINTED FOR WAUGH AND INNES;
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BY DAVID HESSELY

Minister of the Gospel, Glasgow.

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ADVERTISEMENT.



THE design of the following Essay is to prove from Scripture, that all children dying in infancy are saved through Christ. The substance of a great part of it was written some years ago, for the benefit of a friend. In the hope that it might be useful to some who have doubts on the subject, and in particular, to bereaved parents, the writer was lately induced to revise it with a view to publication. In the course of his progress he met with an interesting Essay on the same subject, by Dr. Harris of Hoxton, of several thoughts in which he has availed himself.

Some Hints are introduced on the Adamic and Christian Dispensations, in order to illustrate the character of Adam as a public head; the nature of the penalty annexed to the first transgression, and the connexion between the work and resurrection of Christ, and the redemption of infants. It is well known, that Divine truths are so interwoven and so scattered throughout the Scriptures, that the proper knowledge of one cannot be obtained without some acquaintance with many of the rest. Great are the

practical advantages of this mode of revelation, and it were wrong to expect a different mode to be followed on the subject in question. From a wish to obviate objections which he has met with, in reading and in conversation, the writer has however been led to say more on collateral subjects than he originally intended, but he hopes that the work will not appear tedious to such as feel difficulties on the interesting point of infant salvation. It was, in particular, his wish to remove certain prejudices which are entertained by some against the doctrine of the indiscriminate salvation of deceased infants, as inimical to several branches of evangelical truth. Nothing can be more unfounded than this apprehension, and its existence is deeply to be regretted, for it has been the occasion of many gross misrepresentations of the doctrines of grace. Some, indeed, have rested the sentiment in question on improper grounds, several of which are adverted to in the following pages ; but it is for Christians “to distinguish things that differ,” to “prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good.”

If his endeavours should be the means of solving the doubts, and of comforting the heart of any bereaved parent, with whose wounded feelings he thinks he can sympathize, the writer will feel himself amply rewarded.

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AN

ESSAY

ON THE SALVATION OF INFANTS.

SECTION I.

THE death of an Infant is far from being an uncommon occurrence. There are but few who are parents long, without suffering the pang of parental grief, inflicted by the distress and death of one or more of their children. He who knows our frame, has borrowed parental sensations to show his tender compassion towards his people. "Like
" as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth
" them that fear him."^a "Can a woman," says he "forget her sucking child, that she should not
" have compassion on the son of her womb? yea,
" they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."^b When Jehovah describes the bitterest grief, he compares it to the grief felt for an only son, and for a first born. "They shall mourn, as one

^a Psalm, ciii. 12.

^b Isaiah, xlix. 15

“that mourneth for an only son, and shall be in bitterness, as one that is in bitterness for a first-born.”^a Who, but a bereaved parent can fully enter into this? The feeling must be experienced in order to be fully understood. A suffering and a dying infant, is to a parent a sight inexpressibly melting. And when animation is gone, and all that remains is silent and still, countless recollections crowd around the heart, and from the lips there escapes the doleful expression—*all is over now.*

The most pressing inquiry by a christian parent in such circumstances, must be “Is it well with the child.” The mind instinctively says, Whether art thou fled? to what world hast thou gone? The heart is deeply interested, and its very love makes it suspicious. Can a parent who knows the value of his own soul, and has tasted the sweetness of christian hope, and christian joy, be for a moment indifferent to the everlasting welfare of that being, whom he was the means of bringing into existence; and will he not put the question “What is written in the law, how readest thou?” Conjecture will not satisfy him, probability will not soothe or gladden his mind. He will be anxious to see whether there is genuine ground for confidence, respecting the final fate of his infant offspring, on their leaving this world.

^a Zechariah; xii. 10.

There are cases in which it were in vain to search for certainty in regard to the dead. There may be strong reason to fear even the worst, or at least there may be no ground to conclude any thing in their favour. In such circumstances, it is for us to imitate Aaron, who on witnessing the fearful death of his sons, Nadab and Abihu, devoutly *held his peace*. This was no small attainment. But surely in cases, where there is no positive reason for an unfavourable conclusion, it cannot be improper to inquire, if there is any for the assurance of hope. To oppose, or repine against what God has said, is inipious—to pry into what he tells us he has purposely concealed, is highly criminal, but to inquire whether or not he has revealed a particular thing, and if so, what the Revelation amounts to, so far from being sinful, is a bounden duty. Let us then endeavour to ascertain, what the Scripture reveals on the final state of departed infants.

It seems proper to begin our inquiries into this subject, by the consideration of the first constitution established with Adam ; for in Scripture, a parallel is stated between him and the Lord Jesus Christ. There can certainly be no parallel between them, in regard to their personal conditions, which are infinitely different ; except that both are partakers of human nature, and therefore the parallel must respect them in a public character. It is evident from Scripture, that Adam was dealt with,

not merely as an individual man, but as mankind, because he sustained the character of the representative, or head of his posterity, so that if he stood the trial, all his posterity stood in him, and were confirmed in life; and if he fell, all fell in him, and shared in the consequences. The threatening of death in case of disobedience, plainly implied a promise of the continuance, at least of that life, which was then enjoyed. “The Lord God
 “commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the
 “garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree
 “of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not
 “eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou
 “shalt surely die.”^a It is idle to say, that in the threatening, there is no express mention made of posterity, because the words are, “in the day that
 “*thou* eatest thereof, *thou* shalt surely die,” and that therefore they are not included. It might as well be said that because the address is said to have been made to the man, it did not include the woman. It is very true that the death denounced, only came on his posterity, in as far as they were capable subjects of it, but to this extent, the threatening must have gone. Every thing else which God said to Adam, in a state of innocence, though immediately addressed to him, had a direct reference to his descendants. Thus the blessing pronounced on Adam, the injunction, to increase and multiply,

^a Genesis ii. 16, 17.

and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and the dominion conferred on him, over the creatures; were all intended to apply to his children, as well as to himself. *a* To them as well as to him, was the grant of food made. *b* The obligation to sanctify the Sabbath, was binding on both. *c* And the blessings and duties of the married relation, extend to the one as well as the other. *d* Is it to be supposed then, that though on every thing else, the language of God, included the whole of the human race; yet, the commandment respecting the tree of knowledge of good and evil, regarded Adam, in his individual capacity alone. Such an idea is quite untenable on Scripture ground. This is beyond controversy, apparent from the declarations of God, in Gen. chap. iii. 17, 18, 19; respecting the woman, the man, the ground, and the punishment of death. Do not facts prove every day, that these declarations are more or less verified, in the experience of the whole human race. And is not the mode of expression in *them*, precisely the same as in the original threatening: and does it not indeed actually refer back to that threatening, as a part of its fulfilment. This view of the subject is confirmed by the incontestable facts, that all mankind are universally exposed to a variety of natural evils; are subjected to death, and are all in a condition of moral depravity.

a Genesis, i. 28. *b* Verse 29. *c* Genesis ii. 2, 3. *d* Verse 24.

Were suffering and death confined to adults, it might be supposed that they entirely proceeded from personal offences, and not from the sin of Adam. But how can the sufferings and death of infants, be accounted for, seeing they have been guilty of no actual offence. In no other way certainly, than that stated by the Apostle, when he says, “That
 “by one man sin entered into the world, and
 “death by sin, and so death passed through to
 “all men, in whom all have sinned.”^a That is, in consequence of their connection with Adam, as their public head and representative, all men are treated as sinners, inasmuch as they are doomed to suffer the effects of his sin. In consequence of that state of things which originated in the sin of Adam, all men universally became sinners; for that sin which entered into the world by Adam’s transgression, did not stop with him, but infected the whole of the human race; all of whom are therefore considered as sinners and are treated accordingly. The Jews erred exceedingly, in supposing that the law of Moses was the great univereal rule of judgment; and that the nations were constituted sinners through the want of it; for before that law was given, men were universally treated as sinners. Now as sin is not imputed, that is, none are treated as sinners, where there is no law, because where no law is, there is no transgression; there must

have been some previous law, the violation of which incurred death. This was the original law of works, established with Adam. Through his transgression of that law, and not by their personal offences, are all his posterity subjected to death; as is evident from the fact that death reigns over multitudes of infants, who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam, inasmuch as they have not like him been guilty of *actual* transgression. Does it not follow, then, that they are treated as a part of the species involved in the sin of its head.

Adam did not actually die on the day in which he sinned, but he became liable to death, and therefore became dead in law. The expression, “in “the *day* that thou eatest, thou shalt surely die,” is used here as in other parts of Scripture, to signify, the certain connexion between the offence and its punishment; and a certain exposure to that punishment. Thus, when Solomon charged Shimei to abide in Jerusalem, and added, “It shall be, “that on the *day* thou goest out, and passest over “the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain, “that thou shalt surely die;”^a he did not mean that if Shimei was not apprehended and executed on *the very day* on which he quitted the city, then he would not be put to death. It is evident, that the intention of the King was only to

^a I. Kings ii. 37.

assure him that his life would be forfeited from the time that he absconded, and would be taken away, *when* and *where* might be judged expedient. The same view must be taken of the declaration of Ezekiel, that the righteous shall not be able to live, for his former righteousness, *in the day* that he sinneth.^a It solemnly marks the certain connexion between final apostacy and ruin; but does not mean, that on the first instance of apostacy. Judgment should immediately follow. In like manner, the threatening against Adam, did not oblige the Almighty to inflict death on him, on the very day of his sin; but it solemnly assured him, that on that day he would forfeit his right, in virtue of the promise, to immortality, and become liable to death at whatever time God saw meet to inflict it.

The plans of Providence required that the full execution of the sentence should be suspended, but from that day he began to die, though the work of dissolution was not completed, till he yielded up his spirit. His life included not only existence, but happiness, and on the day in which he sinned, he became mortal as to his body, and was subjected to trouble and distress; and his spirit became dead to all the principles of that blessed life of which he was possessed; inasmuch as he was cut off from the favour and fellowship of God,

^a Ezekiel xxxiii. 12.

and fell under the power of a wretched hostility against him. The sentence and the event, clearly show, then, that the precise time in which the full infliction of the curse should take place, was not intended to be fixed. Now the case is the same with the death of his posterity; for though all of them are under the sentence of death, yet they do not all die at the same age. It rests with the Judge, to fix the time and the circumstances, in which the general sentence shall be executed. He accordingly fixes them so as best to answer the designs of his providence.

There is in this, as in other things, a correspondence between the treatment of Adam and that of his children. "In Adam all die." They are not in a state of trial, similar to that in which he was; they are condemned to death already, and accordingly are born unto trouble. His death was the pledge of the death of all his posterity, just as the resurrection of Christ, is the pledge of the blessed resurrection of all his people.

The whole of Pauls reasoning, in the latter part of the 5th Chapter of the epistle to the Romans; proceeds on the principle, that Adam is to be considered not merely as the natural root, but also as the public head, and representative of the whole of mankind. "But not as the offence," says he, "so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one, many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded into many.

“ And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the
 “ gift: for the judgment was by one (offence) to con-
 “ demnation, but the free gift is of many offences
 “ unto justification. For if by one man’s offence
 “ death reigned by that one man; much more reason
 “ is there to expect, that they who receive, (embrace)
 “ the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righte-
 “ ousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.
 “ Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment
 “ came upon all men to condemnation; even so by
 “ the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon
 “ men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s
 “ disobedience many were made sinners; so by the
 “ obedience of one many shall be made righteous.”^a

Now here Adam and Christ are contrasted as
 the public heads of their respective seeds. By the
 latter the redeemed “ shall reign in life.” By
 the righteousness of one, (as the ground of pardon
 and acceptance) the free gift came upon all (classes
 of) men unto justification of life. By the obed-
 ience of one shall many be made (constituted or
 treated as) righteous. Now if it be on account of
 one man’s obedience unto death, as the Scriptures
 uniformly testify, that sinners come to be justified,
 or treated as righteous, it follows that to make
 the parallel here drawn a fair one, it must be on
 account of one man’s transgression, that men come
 in the first instance to be constituted sinners, that

^a Romans v. 15.—19.

is, to be treated as such. The Apostle accordingly declares, that by the first man sin and death entered into the world: and in reasoning on the subject, he employs the following expressions. "Through
 " the offence of one many are dead." " The
 " judgment was by one to condemnation." " By
 " one man's offence death reigned by one," " By
 " the offence of one, judgment came upon all men
 " to condemnation." " By one man's disobedience
 " many were made sinners," that is, constituted or
 treated as such.

The parallel here drawn between Adam and Christ, illustrates our subject. In the former part of the Chapter, the Apostle had dwelt on the wonderful display of the love and mercy of God, in giving up his own Son, to suffer and die for us; while helpless and ungodly, sinners and enemies: —on the blessed state of reconciliation and acceptance, into which we are brought, through the death of the Saviour:—on the security we have in the heavenly life, and exalted glory of our great high priest, that our salvation shall be completed, and our blessedness continued:—and on the exalted glory to which we are elevated, in having God himself as our portion. Now, referring to all this, as illustrative of the exceeding glory of Christian redemption: he says in the 12th verse.
 " Wherefore, these precious and exalted blessings,
 " are bestowed in a way, parallel to that, in which
 " sin and death entered into the world; and have

“there prevailed, in all ages and circumstances.”

The similitude here introduced, does not lie in the nature or degree of the two things compared, but in the manner of their conveyance to all men, without regard to the difference made by the Mosaic law. The condemnation of death came unto all men, whether Jews or Gentiles, through the offence of Adam; and in like manner, the blessings of which he had been speaking, come unto all men inasmuch as in the gospel, they are proclaimed to all, whether Jews or Gentiles, and are obtained by all who believe without difference. chap. iii. 22.

But though the resemblance between the way in which we fell through Adam, and that in which we are saved and blessed through Christ, is the great thing insisted on in the following part of the chapter; yet, in reasoning on this, he refers to the exalted view which he had previously given of the blessedness of the church of God. In speaking of the loss sustained in the one case, and of the gain received in the other, he represents the latter in a light, which shows that it is not merely a restoration to what was lost, but an elevation to an infinitely higher condition. But exalted as this condition is, and much as it exceeds the damage sustained, “if through the offence of one, many “be dead,” much more reason was there to expect, that according as has taken place, “the grace of “God, and the gift conferred by grace, for the sake

“of one man Jesus Christ, should abound unto many.” The gift of restoration does not merely reverse the forfeiture incurred by the one offence of Adam; but also delivers believers of the gospel, from all that is incurred by their own personal or actual offences. This is nothing more than what might be expected, when we consider the dignity of Jesus as God in our nature, and the infinite glory and value of that work, in which Jehovah rests with ineffable delight.

Justice is limited in its exercise to the desert of sin, but grace when not prevented by the claims of offended justice, is unrestricted in its communications; though certainly, its exercise is always regulated by wisdom. God never can inflict more as a judge, than justice demands; but in the communication of good, he acts as a sovereign benefactor, and therefore gives according to the good pleasure of his will. Now, since through Christ, the law is magnified, and sin expiated, there are no obstructions to the sovereign exercise of mercy and grace; so that there is every reason to expect an exceeding display of rich and abundant goodness. If sin hath abounded unto death, there is more reason now to expect that grace will abound unto eternal life, glory and blessedness.

A similar view of the character of Adam and of Christ, is given in 1 Cor. xv. 45—47. The latter is called the second Adam; and obviously for no other reason than this, namely, that both of them

were public characters, and heads of their respective seeds. "The first man," it is said, "is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven." Now Jesus was not the second man who lived, for the first-born son of Adam was so, and therefore the meaning must be, that Adam and Jesus are the first and second man, in a sense that cannot admit of another of the same character. And what can this character be, but that representative character, in virtue of which, the disobedience of the former became the cause why many are treated as sinners; and the obedience to death of the latter, the ground on which many are constituted righteous. Here as in Rom. 5th. the apostle, while he compares Adam and Christ, keeps his eye fixed on the immense difference between them; and on the immense difference between what we have become through the former, and what we shall attain through the latter. If we have borne the image of the earthly Adam, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly; when our bodies shall be fashioned like to his glorious body, and when with this blessing, shall be connected likeness in spirit and condition, in glory and enjoy-

SECTION II.

IN this Section we shall consider more particularly the consequences of the breach of that constitution which was established with the first man, as our public head.

The justice of this procedure in regard to Adam and his posterity, has often been questioned; but surely the safest way of judging what is fit for the Almighty to do, is to consider what he *has* done; and to resolve undeniable facts into his infinite wisdom and righteous supremacy, however unable we may be fully to account for them. Does not the prevalence of death where no actual sin has been committed, prove that in some sense, infants are held as guilty, for death is the wages of sin? Does not experience prove that all mankind are morally depraved? This is not the effect of imitation only, for propensities are found in children towards evils of which they have seen no example; good examples are imitated with great reluctance, while those of the very worst kind are eagerly followed; and corruption must have existed before there could be examples of evil.

To account for the corruption of mankind by example, is to make it account for itself: or to be its own cause: for how came bad examples into being, and how came they to be so general among all classes, in all places, and in all ages of the

world? Do not these things shew the truth of the scriptures, which trace sin to an evil bias, antecedent to all example? Do not children soon discover pride and vanity, deceit and selfishness, an impatience of restraint, a spirit of retractoriness, and a desire, not only to be their own masters, but to have the ascendancy over all around them? Do they not in particular discover an aversion to the things of God? And is it not clear then, that all evil proceeds from the state of the heart.

This is the view which is expressed by David, when he says, “Behold I was shapen in iniquity, “and in sin did my mother conceive me.”^a What else would lead him to take notice of his being born in sin, but the experience which he had of of an inbred disposition to evil. Sin is represented as what belongs to man in his natural state. “The way of *man*, is froward and strange.”^b “Are ye not carnal and walk as *men*?”^c “Thou savourest not the things that be of *God*; but those that be of *men*.”^d These passages plainly signify, that to be froward, carnal, and indisposed to what is scriptural and divine, is what properly belongs to men in their present condition.

At an early period, a distinction, which has continued ever since, began to be made between the people of God, and the people of the world. “Then

^a Psalms li. 5.

^b Prov. xxi. 5.

^c I. Cor. ii. 3.

^d Mat. xvi. 23.

began men to call themselves (or to be called) by the name of the Lord.^a The race of Cain, in consequence of their neglect of divine worship, and their attachment to the things of this life, were called “sons of men;” whereas the others, were denominated the “sons of God.” The importance of this distinction appears, from our being told, that forming connections inconsistent with a due regard to it, proved the cause of that enormous wickedness which occasioned the deluge.^b The sons of God or his professed worshippers, married the daughters of men, that is, of the irreligious world. In reference to this distinction, it is said of the Israelites, that though as a people separated unto God, and called his children in distinction from others; it was to be expected that they would have acted as members of his family; they had on the contrary like *men*, that is, like the people of the world, transgressed the covenant. In disregarding the covenant of their God, they discovered the spirit, and acted the part of the nations around. The same evil is charged upon the Corinthians, when it is said to them “Are ye not carnal and walk as *men*.” Now, why is this behaviour called the behaviour of *men*, but because it belongs to their nature in their present condition. Accordingly the testimony of God is, that the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth;^c and that the wicked are e-

^a Gen. iv. 26. ^b Gen. vi. 1—6. ^c Hosea vi. 7. ^d Gen. viii. 24.

stranged from the womb, and go astray as soon as they are born, or as soon as they are capable of moral actions.^a And I may add, that when any tendency towards good is discovered, it is invariably traced to the influence of the grace of God.^b

Whatever difficulties we may feel in regard to the permission of sin, yet as it was a permission approved of by infinite wisdom and goodness, it becomes us to bow to the dispensations of heaven, and to rest satisfied that the judge of all must do right. Every other system than that of the Scriptures, instead of relieving from difficulties, increases them a thousand fold. The scriptures in declaring the corruption of human nature, only declare a fact, which all experience confirms. Now the fact itself is independent of every thing else. The scriptures are not responsible for it,—they only declare it,—and if a more full account of the origin of this fact than that which they contain, were really requisite, no doubt it had been given. We ought therefore, humbly to submit to our present partial vision, and to wait for the day, when all difficulties shall for ever vanish before the light of the celestial world.

Our reasonings can never overthrow facts. Let us therefore with the spirit of meek submission to the revelation of God, ponder for a little some of the mournful parts of our history. Man, it is

^a Psalms lviii. 3.

^b Duet. xxx. 6.

^c Gal. v. 22, 23.

evident, "is born unto trouble." He is doomed to a life of labour and of sorrow;—he is closely connected with the material objects around him for the support of his life; and in a measure, also of his enjoyment;—these objects, in consequence of the state of his mind, unhappily swallow up his attention, and estrange him from God;—he grows up in supreme attachment to them, and he forms his sentiments upon them. The love of the present world, governs his heart, excludes the love of God, and leads him away from the only fountain of genuine enjoyment. His rational faculties, which ought to be properly adjusted, and ought to balance his heart with things spiritual and eternal, are corrupted and perverted, and so have lost their influence; and as he advances in life he contracts by practice and deeply rooted associations, stronger and more inveterate habits of sin. He will naturally chooses what the judgment for the moment suggests is *agreeable*, but how different is this from choosing what the understanding dictates to be *right*. How indeed is man sunk when the evil inclinations of his heart lead him to employ his rational faculties merely to discover what will be gratifying! Is it a matter of wonder that in such circumstances his judgment becomes increasingly darkened, that his sentiments are formed entirely on the present scene, and that his principles rapidly become increasingly corrupted. Guilt often causes uneasiness; but alas! instead of leading

him to God, from whom alone relief can be had, it leads him to view the Almighty as his enemy, and excites his heart to treat him as such. He looks upon the true character of God as opposed to his happiness, because his holiness and rectitude appear to forbid, that he should look with regard on a sinful and unholy creature; and because in calling on man to abandon all that is pleasing to his depraved taste and desires, he appears to be calling him to renounce every thing that can yield enjoyment. The mind is thus filled with dread, and hatred, and jealousy; and to reconcile the heart to the Scripture character of God, requires the exertion of an Almighty power.

This enmity does not often burst out into open attacks upon Heaven, though even of this there have been fearful instances; but it is felt in internal wishes, that God were not so holy and so determined against sin, as his word represents him. Hence it is, that men endeavour so to represent the divine character, as to reconcile the hope of escaping wrath, and of reaching Heaven, with the indulgence of their sinful propensities. They frame a God such as they wish, and while they rest their hope on the worship of this imaginary deity, they consider not, that they are bowing to an idol, and manifesting their hatred of the genuine character of the only living and true God.

Such is the dark side of the state in which man has been placed in consequence of the fall. But

it is an unspeakable mercy, that the very constitution established with the first man, through the breach of which we have been involved in ruin, is employed by God, to illustrate the new constitution established with the second Adam. The former was of the earth, earthy, and at best could only communicate what he had himself. And as the stream can rise no higher than the fountain, we see in his death the stream dried up, and consequently we have a pledge of our mortality. But let us turn to the second Adam. He too died, but he is now alive for evermore; and because he lives his people shall also live; for since he ever liveth, he is able to save to the uttermost, all who come unto God by him.^a

Instead of arraigning the equity or the goodness of God, it is for men to be humbled under a sense of their depravity, and their actual guilt; and to consider the liberal provision which has been made for the salvation of sinners, not only from the effects of the sin of Adam, but from the dismal consequences of actual transgressions, and for their restoration to the image and enjoyment of God.

In the 5th chapter of the epistle to the Romans, it is clearly taught us, that one reason of the appointment of Adam as the public representative of mankind, was with a view to introduce the Saviour in a similar character, and to illustrate the

^a John xiv. 19.—Romans iv. 25. v. 10.—Heb. vii. 25.

plan of redemption through him. Hence the former is called a figure of the latter. The analogy of the two systems, presents a harmonious correspondence between the way in which sin and death entered into the world, through the breach, not of a moral precept, but of a positive appointment, arising from the mere will of God, and the sovereignty which hath provided redemption through Christ. In tracing this analogy, the apostle particularly includes the state of infants, by the distinct reference which he makes to the reign of death over multitudes of them, from the days of Adam to those of Moses. It is true that adults who died during that period, did not sin like Adam as representatives, nor against an express law denouncing death as he did, and therefore they did not sin in the same direct circumstance; but still, it cannot be said of those who possessed the capacity of reason, that they did not sin after the "similitude of Adam's transgression," since their offences, like his, were deliberate acts of wickedness. Now, it deserves particular attention, that it is while he thus dwells upon the forfeiture sustained by infants, through their relation to Adam, that he introduces the highly important consideration, that our first parent "is the figure of Him that was to come." As the many became subject to death, through the offence of the former, so provision is made by the latter, for the salvation of all who receive, or embrace, the abundance of grace exhibited

in him.^a Infants cannot actually embrace this salvation, but neither can they neglect it; and if all who are capable of embracing it, and actually do so, are delivered not only from the effects of the one offence of Adam, but from all their own personal offences, does it not follow, that such of the human race as never could reject this salvation, and are liable only to the effects of the one offence, shall be saved through the second Adam, as they were condemned in consequence of the sin of the first. In regard to *them*, the two systems are co-extensive, for as the only limitation is to those who receive or accept the grace, infants, who could not, cannot be excluded from it.

To form conjectures about what would have taken place had Adam continued obedient, is altogether vain; since it is evident from the event, that it was foreseen, that the first constitution of things would not be permanent; and that it was made subservient to the introduction of a more glorious display of the divine perfections in the economy of redemption. The world was created not only *by*, but *for* HIM, who appeared in our nature in order fully to unfold the character and glory of God. To this wonderful display of the divine character, the entrance of sin has by the over-ruling providence of Heaven, been made subservient; while at the sametime, the guilt of man was not thereby lessened. God has, in his wisdom, made evil the occasion of good, but this does not in the

least excuse the sinner. He acted freely under the influence of principles, evil in themselves, hateful to God, and ruinous in their natural uncontrolled effects, and the manifestation of the divine glory in Christ has been made in the way of a remedy.

I do not mean to enter on the consideration of the whole nature or the full extent of the curse, consequent upon the sin of Adam. It is sufficient for my present object to mention that it certainly does include natural death, for we are taught, that by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and that thus death hath come upon all men, in consequence of the first sin of Adam. That in Adam all die, or are become subject to death, is a fact which admits of no dispute; and children therefore must be considered as having fallen so far under the penal consequences of the first transgression, since death is a penalty, and sin its only assignable cause. Natural death is never ascribed to the many offences of men, but to the "one offence" of Adam only. It is true that many infants perished in the flood, and in the destruction of the cities of the plain, and some in the families, of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, but those children were previously liable to death as descendants of the first man, so that their *death itself* did not arise from the sins of their parents, but only the *time* and the violent manner of it. God has a right to choose the time and the manner in which he will

execute the general sentence, which dooms the human race to the grave; and in cases such as these, he executes it at such times, and in such ways as that while they manifest his displeasure against the first sin of Adam, they also manifest his indignation against the sins of the immediate parents, of such children. It is the plan of God to accomplish many ends by the same means. Such dispensations, then, militate not against what I have stated.

The connection between the first man and his posterity, is in many things different from that which subsists between children and their immediate parents; but still in certain respects, the one illustrates the other. With regard to the loss sustained by the children of Adam in consequence of his sin, it is the loss of what they had no *natural* right to; and particularly of that which they had no right to, in order to their being accountable agents; for their right to it arose entirely from their relation to him, in the benefits of whose obedience they would have participated, had he continued holy. It is with them as with the children of a traitor against an earthly government, who do not forfeit any natural right, such as life; but only their relative rights, that is, honour, rank in society, and such like things; their right to which arises solely from their relation to their father, who holds those privileges on certain conditions. When those conditions are violated, he is stript of his privileges,

and therefore cannot convey them to his children. But where there are just laws, as the children of such an offender have not forfeited their lives to the government, they are not punished with death, or with any corporeal punishment. That which befalls them, is the loss of what would have been their standing in society, had their father continued in possession of it, and not a thing to which they had a natural right. Such is the spirit of the law,—
 “The children shall not be put to death for the
 “fathers; every man shall be put to death for his
 “own sin.”^a

Two things, however, deserve attention here. First, there is no such union subsisting between children and their immediate parents, as between Adam and his posterity, who are in law considered as one; and therefore a difference may be expected between the effects of the sin of our public representative, and the effect of the iniquities of our immediate progenitors. Secondly, though men, in relation to an earthly government, have a natural right to life, and cannot have it forfeited by the crimes of a parent, yet, in relation to God, they have no natural right to existence, and therefore God, the author of their being, can deprive them of life at his pleasure.

Still, however, the reference which I have just made to the conduct of a righteous human govern-

^a Deut. xxiv. 16.

ment, serves to illustrate the subject. To a creature as a creature, God owes nothing; for the very idea of derivation, and that of absolute dependance, which are essential to a creature, exclude all claims on the Creator for existence itself; and consequently for its continuance, or any of its positive enjoyments. In so far as the happiness of life exceeds its sufferings, in so far has the creature received a boon from the Almighty. But to a creature considered as an *accountable* agent, God owes those things which are necessary to constitute him such; particularly natural faculties, freedom in their exercise, and objects suited to his wants. Now all these were enjoyed by Adam, and whatever more was granted him, was superadded as matter of sovereign favour. To use the expression already employed, though to the former he had a natural right, yet to the latter he had not. The guilt therefore which attaches to his posterity, is that which he incurred as a representative, possessed of what may be called "chartered benefits," when he violated the condition on which those benefits had been granted. His descendants are treated as sinners, that is, they are obnoxious to the loss of the superadded favours which were granted to him. To these superadded favours, his posterity have no natural right, because they were to be granted them only in the event of his continuing obedient. Yet as the possession of natural faculties and moral means for their exercise, constitutes the true ground

of moral obligation, their accountability is untouched; for as soon as their faculties are developed, they become by their means responsible agents.

It follows, that in order to account for a sinful corruption of nature, it is not necessary to suppose that any evil quality was infused by God into the nature of man. When our first parents, instead of continuing to seek their happiness in God, acted under the influence of the blind operation of that necessary principle, which leads a creature to seek for enjoyment, gave way to the instinct of real gratifications, and so withdrew from God as the supreme object of affection and source of blessedness; God then withdrew from them that special influence which had all along been the bestowment, not of equity, but of favour. Now, in the circumstances in which they had placed themselves, this was followed by a total corruption of nature. Death followed, and in it was included the loss of all that life of holiness and happiness, in the enjoyment of the favour and fellowship of God, of which Adam was then possessed. Now, as God dealt with him as our public head, so he treats his posterity as having sinned in him; and therefore he does not impart that special influence to which they have no *natural* claim, and to which as the descendants of Adam, they have no *relative* claim, since the constitution established with him has been broken. He can be under no obligation to impart to the children, what he was not obliged to continue in

the father. The consequence is, that they come into the world void of the positive moral image of God, and in their present circumstances, this state is followed by their falling under the government of the inferior and animal principles of their nature, and so becoming wholly corrupt. Their faculties themselves are derived from God, but their corrupt bent is not from him, nor indeed from any positive infusion whatever; but arises from a privative cause. The result is, that personal transgression is produced in all cases where life continues, till moral agency commences, and as soon as it does so.

Such is the doctrine of scripture on this important subject, and such are the views of it which are taught by the most eminent and esteemed evangelical writers. "Original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil."^a

"The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adams first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin, together with all actual transgressions, which proceed from it. ^b

Mr Jonathan Edwards, in replying to an op-

^a Article, ix. of the Church of England.

^b Assembly's Catechism, Answer, xviii.

ponent of the doctrine of original sin, thus expresses himself. "This writer supposes something to belong to the doctrine objected against, as maintained by the divines whom he is opposing, which does not belong to it, nor does follow from it; as particularly, he supposes the doctrine of original sin to imply, that nature must be corrupted by some *positive influence*; something by some means or other *infused* into the human nature; some quality or other, not from the choice of our minds, but like a *taint, tincture, or infection*, altering the natural constitution, faculties and dispositions of our souls. That sin and evil dispositions are implanted in the *fœtus* in the womb. Whereas truly, our doctrine neither implies nor infers any such thing. In order to account for a sinful corruption of nature, yea, a total depravity of the heart of man, there is not the least need of supposing any evil quality *infused, implanted, or wrought* into the nature of man, by any positive cause or influence whatever, either from God or the creature. I think a little attention to the nature of things will be sufficient to satisfy any impartial enquirer that the absence of positive good principles, and so the withholding of a special divine influence to impart and maintain those good principles, leaving the common principles of self love, natural appetite, &c. (which were in man in innocence,) to themselves, without the government of superior

“divine principles, will certainly be followed with
 “the corruption, yea, the total corruptions of the
 “heart, without occasion for any positive influence
 “at all. As Adam’s nature became corrupt with-
 “out God’s implanting or infusing of any evil thing
 “into it, so does the nature of his posterity.”^a

There is reason to think, that mistakes have been entertained on the doctrine of original sin, from not properly considering the import of the terms often employed to express it. The use of terms which convey the idea of something positive, and of something superadded to the subject or the agent spoken of, if these terms are not well defined, have a tendency to mislead.

The manner in which sin originates, does not by any means involve the idea that mankind become the subject of it by compulsion, or by natural necessity : for what they are, they freely choose to be, and in all their actions they act freely. Indeed there is no such thing in existence as involuntary sin ; for in the consent of the will of an accountable agent, lies the very essence of sin. There is no unrighteousness then in the government of God, when the children of Adam are born into the world in that state which originates in his sin.

The grounds of accountability, and of moral obligation, exist in the case of the descendants of Adam as really as they did in his own. It is not necessary to constitute an accountable being that he

^a Edwards, on Original Sin, Part iv. chap. 2.

should be actually inclined to holy services, but merely that he could perform such services *if he were inclined*. If inclinations were the rule of duty, on the ground of obligation it would follow, that the more depraved and abandoned a creature, the less is he obliged to be holy, and of course the less sinful is he. The absurdity of this I need not stop to exhibit. It is a principle which destroys at once both the law and the gospel. It is not sufficient to say that we had once power in Adam to obey; and that though we have now lost this power, God has not lost his power to command. Adam, it is true, was our public head, but what we have lost through him, did not, as I have already stated, constitute the ground of moral obligation, it was a superadded favour. The possession of natural faculties, and of moral means for their exercise, lays us under obligation to the extent of those faculties and means. We are not required to love God with the strength of angels, for we have not their faculties; we are required to love him with "all our heart, soul, strength, and mind." Duty is measured, not by moral ability, or, which is the same thing, holy inclination, but natural ability, that is, the possession of natural faculties.

Nothing which is essential to moral obligation is impaired by the fall, because, though the mental faculties and bodily powers of mankind are impaired by it, yet the weaknesses which follow are not held criminal. The scriptures accordingly never repre-

sent weakness in mental faculties and bodily vigour as sinful, but as pitiable infirmities. The removal of the depravity of man, does not require the communications of any new physical powers or faculties. The change affected by the spirit of God, consists in giving a right direction to the faculties already possessed. Of his free favour he imparts a new heart, by infusing a new principle and disposition. It does not require greater natural faculties to love God, than to hate him. All that is required is, that we consecrate to him the talents we possess. He is no austere master, reaping where he has not sown, and gathering where he has not strawed.

The actions of those, for example, who are deprived of reason, though this state is certainly the consequence of the fall of man, are never deemed punishable, because they are not the deeds of accountable agents. The blind are never blamed because they do not see, nor the deaf because they do not hear; for otherwise they *could* not *be*, and these things they could not *do* if they *would*. Mankind, speaking generally, still retain their intelligent faculties; and so far are they from being impelled to sin, that in all their actions they are voluntary agents. Even in the present state, the duty of man is no more than what is commensurate with the degree of natural faculties; and the measure of the means which he enjoys for their exercise. God requires of every man that his spirit and his deeds be perfectly free from evil; but he does not re-

quire in point of degree, the same positive extent from every individual. Duty is ever measured by the degree of natural faculties and means. As the circumstances of men, with regard to the means of information are exceedingly different, all are not required to be equally intelligent; and as their powers of memory, reasoning, and understanding are very various, even where the means of information are the same, the same result is not expected in all, for nothing is required that is *naturally* impossible. The obligations of children therefore, must increase only in proportion as their faculties expand; and according to the kind and degree of the advantages which fall to their lot.

This is quite a different thing from resting the ground of moral obligation on the actual existence of good inclinations, or, in other words, no moral ability; a principle which is scouted among men in regard to their own affairs, and cannot be the ground of their obligation to God. Let no man bless himself in this, that he has got a bad heart, in which he may bury his sins and thus keep his conscience quiet. No person will be found more sinful than he chose to be, for no action will be deemed sinful, which was not the effect of choice. When men speak thus lightly of the badness of their hearts, it is evident that by heart they understand, they know not what, something quite distinct from disposition, intention or desire.

It is no excuse to plead, that it is in consequence

of their connexion with Adam, that men come to be depraved. It is not with sin as with a natural defect or affliction in our mental faculties, or our bodily powers; for sin is a moral deficiency, and it cannot be committed without a criminal inclination of heart. It would not exculpate traitors and murderers were they to plead, that they were the offspring of rebels, and the "*seed of evil doers.*" If possessed of reason, capable of distinguishing between right and wrong, and voluntary agents, what would it avail to say, that their disposition was that of their family? And what plea can men have, seeing every man's conscience tells him, that he transgresses voluntarily, and therefore criminally.

The descendants of Adam, in consequence of his sin, are held guilty in the sense of obnoxiousness to suffering, inasmuch as they suffer the loss of that which, although they have no natural claim to it as accountable creatures, they would have enjoyed, had he been obedient. This, however, as has been already stated, interferes not with the freedom of their actions; and leaves their accountability untouched. To the superadded favours granted to Adam, they have no more right than they have to immortality. To the latter blessing, no creature as such, can have a natural claim; for as God was not at first bound to give existence, he cannot be bound to perpetuate it. Though the threatening of death in case of disobedience, implied a promise of life in case of obedience, which would have laid

a ground of claim for the support of existence, yet, as the commandment was broken, the obligation arising from the promise, has ceased. Now, the same principle is applicable to the whole of what we have lost through the transgression of Adam. We have lost nothing to which we have a natural right. Even the state into which we are brought, with all its frailties and its troubles, is deemed by us better than a state of non-existence; as is evident from the high value which we naturally put upon it. Add to this, that we ought not to view the dispensation established with Adam, by itself alone, we ought to view it in connexion with the dispensation established through Christ, for to the latter it has been the introduction. With our eyes directed to the gospel, we shall see the ways of providence to be in perfect unison with righteousness and grace. It is evident, then, that no one ought to bless himself in the delusive thought, that the blame of his sins is chiefly, if not altogether chargeable upon Adam. There is much of this unhallowed spirit among men, and hence the treatment which both the law and the gospel receive from them.

It is also clear that the scriptures reason justly, when they draw a line of distinction between those who have been guilty of actual transgressions, and those who have not. The appetites and passions of the latter, have not had time to be cherished and employed as have those of the former; and such of

them as die in infancy, are removed from those scenes and causes which would have been the occasion of a grievous abuse of them. In regard, therefore, to actual transgression, the Scriptures call them innocents, *a* and they always distinguish between them and actual offenders. *b* It is true, that had they survived, they would have become actual transgressors, but God will not punish them on account of what they would have done; for he judges his creatures according to what they are and have done—not according to what, without the special aid of His grace, they would do. Men, indeed, will be condemned, not only for the evils which they have actually committed, but also for those which they wished and intended to do; but this is because such deeds are in principle and design, virtually already done; but infants are as incapable of wishing or designing to do deeds of this kind, as of actually doing them.

Since, however, as has been stated, there is no unrighteousness in the government of God, when the children of Adam are born into the world in that state which is occasioned by his sin, the salvation of infants from this state, and from its consequences, must be matter of pure sovereign favour. When God gave his Son to redeem them, as well as others, from the ruin of the fall, he was so far

a Jer. xix. 4. *b* Num. xiv. 31.

Deut. i. 39.

from making men's ~~for~~ an injury, that he was displaying the riches of his grace. Infants, as well as adults, are debtors to the mercy and grace of Heaven, and to the atonement and mediation of Christ; though being free from actual transgression, they are not equally with the latter, debtors to the offended justice and law of God. The measure of this latter debt must in all cases be proportioned to the number and aggravations of the transgressions with which the individual is chargeable. In this respect, one, to use the words of the parable, may owe five hundred pence, and another only fifty. From this difference arises the different degrees of punishment among the finally condemned; and on the same principle, there will be various displays of the *manifest* grace of God, among the multitude of the saved.

It becomes every one to remember, that whatever cavils may be started by his deceitful heart against the scripture doctrine relative to the entrance of sin, that even were that subject entirely set aside, his personal guilt would not thereby be lessened. Does not the conscience of every man tell him that he acts freely, and that he is verily guilty before God? Instead of engaging in unprofitable discussions on what might have been enjoyed had not sin entered, let the mind turn to the infinitely surpassing glory of that hope, which is unfolded in the Gospel of the grace of God; and let the character of God, as displayed in bringing good out

of evil, and order out of confusion, occupy the heart. The same reason which forbids idle speculation, as to what would have taken place had not sin entered, forbids the indulgence of speculation as to what would have taken place in consequence of the sin of Adam, had not a Saviour been provided. There can be no doubt that the breach of the constitution established with the first man, left all his posterity exposed to the loss of that blessed life which was enjoyed in paradise; and in the very nature of things, the loss of this precluded the enjoyment of that positive blessedness in a future state, which is the scriptural import of "eternal life." Not that the deed of Adam can, in point of fact, be the actual deed of his posterity, but that, in consequence of his being their public head and representative, they are so far treated as *though it were theirs* that they suffer the loss of the super-added favours, or the chartered benefits, of which we have just been speaking; and are exposed to the natural consequences of this loss. This, as we have seen, is far from being unjust, for they are deprived of nothing to which, as accountable creatures, they have a natural claim.

It is also true, that the manifestation of the Divine glory in the plan of redemption, has been made in the form of a remedy; and that therefore it cannot be altogether improper to inquire into the nature of that of which it is a remedy. But surely it is safest and wisest in us to adhere closely to

what God has been pleased to reveal, and to be satisfied with the degree of light which he has seen meet to afford us on the subject. We err exceedingly if we suppose that the Creator was disappointed by the entrance of sin, and was necessitated to devise some remedial dispensation, as if the plan of redemption were an after thought. From everlasting he had provided a Saviour, who, as a public Head, should redeem the fallen children of Adam, for the apostacy of the first man was distinctly foreseen. Now, though there be nothing in this at all inconsistent with the free agency and guilt of man, and though we ought not to think of the dispensation established with him as merely a step towards another, or in a way which would imply that man was altogether passive, and therefore free from blame, yet, as in point of fact the former dispensation has in the over-ruling providence of God, been chiefly employed to introduce and illustrate the latter, it is to be expected that comparatively little will be said on a state which it never was designed should exist—I mean a state of the world without a Saviour. Accordingly, the condition in which those of the posterity of Adam, who are exposed to nothing more than the direct relative consequence of his one offence, had been placed by his fall, if a Redeemer had not appeared, is stated in very general terms only, in Scripture. Since God foresaw that sin would enter into the world, and that it would enter *before* Adam had

any posterity—since he had previously provided a Redeemer who should act as a second public representative, and since none but our first parents were in existence before the revelation of the plan of mercy, it cannot be matter of surprise that comparatively little is said on a subject which supposes a state of things which never existed.

I beg that these remarks may be kept in view, in considering what may follow, in relation to this subject; for it is necessary to advert to certain statements which have been made regarding it, in order to remove some objections to the doctrines of this Essay, which have taken their rise from them. Were it not that the statements referred to, however unsanctioned by scripture, have powerfully influenced the minds of many, in regard to the doctrine in question, they should have been passed over without notice,—for it is a kind of discussion which is far from being desirable.

SECTION III.

IN the farther prosecution of the subject, I shall now endeavour to shew, that whatever was included in the original threatening of death, it did not include punishment in the body in the resurrection state; and that as deceased infants shall certainly be raised from the dead, they therefore cannot be raised to misery, but must be raised to blessedness.

Death and a resurrection are so opposed to each other, that the threatening of the former cannot comprehend the latter. The original threatening makes mention of death only, and not of a resurrection to another state, of the body. As the promise of the law of innocence was the continuance of life without dying, for the obedient, so the threatening connected with it was death without a resurrection for the disobedient. It was not said, "Thou shalt surely die, and then rise to new sorrows," but simply, "Thou shalt surely die."

The resurrection of the body was introduced by Christ, not upon the footing of the constitution established with Adam, but upon the footing of that dispensation of mercy of which he himself is the Head. The great promise in this dispensation is that of eternal life—to be begun here, and

to be perfected by a resurrection from the dead; and the great threatening in it is, not that there shall be a resurrection, but that a second death, or misery in both soul and body, shall be inflicted after the resurrection. The resurrection, considered as such or in itself, is not the execution of a threatening,—it is the fruit of the appearance of Christ, and in itself it is a blessing. The second death, accordingly, is represented as taking place *after* the general judgment.^a The import of the threatening which is annexed to the gospel economy is, that *notwithstanding* of their being raised from the dead, such as do not embrace the mercy of Heaven as revealed in it, shall be subjected to a worse death than the first. The resurrection, then, considered *in itself*, is the *removal*, and not the *infliction* of the curse consequent upon the sin of Adam. A miserable resurrection is not the direct fruit of his sin, but of the actual transgressions of mankind. The circumstances connected with the resurrection of the ungodly, will doubtless correspond with their character as sinners, but it will be with their character as *actual* transgressors, and particularly as despisers of the plan of redemption. Those circumstances, therefore, ought not to be confounded with the resurrection itself, but ought to be viewed as resulting from the behaviour of men, in

^a Rev. xx. 14. xxi. 8.

regard to that economy under which they are now placed.

Now, as deceased infants shall all be raised from the dead, it cannot be that they shall be so in order to be doomed to the second death; for that formed no part of the original threatening, and with no other threatening have *they* any thing to do; they must therefore be raised to everlasting life. It cannot for a moment be supposed, that after they have been so far blessed through Christ, as to be delivered from the grave, they shall, without having been guilty of any offence against that dispensation of which he is the Head, be doomed to a punishment peculiar to that dispensation. Surely the Redeemer will never give them occasion to say, that with regard to them he came not to be a Mediator, or a Saviour, but solely to add to their misery!

One great proof of the correctness of this view of the subject is, that if Christ had not appeared, there had been no resurrection of the dead at all; so that had it not been for Him, deceased infants, as well as others, would have continued in the dust. This, I apprehend, throws considerable light on the question respecting the salvation of deceased infants, and I shall therefore consider it more fully.

In the 15th chapter of the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, we have a beautiful summary of apostolic preaching. The apostle dwells in particular on the evidence of Christ's resurrection,

and shews the necessity of holding fast the doctrine of his deliverance from death, by proving that it occupied so essential a place in the gospel testimony, that to depart from it was to sap the very foundation of the Christian Faith,—verses 12—17. None of the Corinthians had as yet been so bold as to deny the resurrection of Christ, but they had admitted principles, which, if followed to their natural consequences, would lead to do so; and hence his zeal for the maintenance of this fundamental truth. They had begun to deny the resurrection of the body, and thus they virtually denied the resurrection of the Saviour himself, on which the truth of Christianity itself rested. Remove this, and the whole fabric of the gospel is gone.

There is nothing in the reasoning of the apostle which can justify the supposition that they had at all questioned the existence and immortality of the soul in a future state. On the contrary, his declaration that their denial of the resurrection of the body, involved in it the rejection of the Gospel, upon which they professed to build all their hope of salvation and of eternal blessedness; and that their denial of this doctrine left them exposed to the fearful desert of their sins, decidedly evinces that they still held fast the truth respecting the existence and immortality of the spirit, in a state of separation from the body. Indeed, the very nature of the case serves to establish this as a fact; for though we can conceive of persons professing

faith in the gospel, while denying the resurrection of the body, because they may be looking for eternal life in the separate state, we cannot conceive how any could, in the very nature of things, even but *profess* to believe the gospel of Christ, while avowing their persuasion that at death there is a complete termination of existence.

But though they had not yet denied the immortality of the soul, they had given too much heed to the sophistical reasonings of men whose principles included this, and many of whom did actually deny it. This the apostle declares in verses 32, 33, 34. His meaning in these verses appears to be this,—“According to the language employed by
 “ the men with whom you have begun to associate.
 “ If I have, for the sake of the Gospel, fought
 “ with wild beasts at Ephesus, what is the advantage to me if the dead rise not? For those men
 “ imagine that death will put a total end to their
 “ existence, and therefore they are in the habit of
 “ saying, ‘Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow
 “ we die.’ You will tell me, that you do not receive *that* part of their creed which respects the
 “ total end of existence at death; but let me entreat you to beware of being deceived, for evil
 “ communications corrupt good manners. Though
 “ you have not yet gone that length, you are in
 “ the way to it; and I beseech you to awake from
 “ your vain dreams, for you have become, as it
 “ were, intoxicated with false notions, and are ad-

"mitting principles which are inconsistent with all
 "proper views of the character of God. I speak
 "this to your shame; for considering the advan-
 "tages which you have had, and the professions
 "which you have made, this behaviour is much
 "worse in you than in others." The apostle, then,
 is shewing what sentiments they were in danger of
 adopting—not what they had already adopted, and
 is warning them that one error received, prepares
 for the reception of another, and another, till the
 whole system of truth comes to be abandoned.—
 "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and
 "worse, deceiving and being deceived;" and hence
 the unutterable importance of continuing stedfastly
 in the faith and hope of the truth of God. *a*

But to return to the subject of their avowed senti-
 ments,—I need not stop to prove that a profession of
 faith in the gospel is utterly inconsistent with the
 persuasion, that at death there is a total end of ex-
 istence. It must be evident at first sight, that a
 profession of faith in the former, is quite incompat-
 ible with a profession of faith in the latter. For a
 time, indeed, a Christian might be led to doubt the
 resurrection of the *body*, because he might look for
 eternal life in his spirit, but he could not question
 the immortality of the *soul*, without avowedly re-
 jecting the whole testimony of the Gospel. If

death puts a total end to our being, there is no meaning in the Gospel, for its whole nature and reasonings proceed on the principle, that there is a state of existence beyond this. On no other principle could it be said to the Corinthians, "If Christ is not risen, ye are yet in your sins;" for if death was viewed by them as a complete termination of their being, it had been idle to speak to them of their being "yet in their *sins*," since in that case there could be nothing in this statement calculated to alarm them. The meaning obviously is, that if Christ was not risen, it followed, that sin had not been expiated, and that therefore there could be no forgiveness. Were this so, then the Corinthians and all Christians, as well as the rest of mankind, would be exposed to all the fearful effects of that curse which shall be the portion of those who pass it to the eternal state, with consciences unpurged from the guilt of rebellion. Where, then, were the consolations and joys of the Gospel? What, then, had been the disappointment of those who had died in the faith of the perfection and acceptance of the atonement of Christ, and in the sanguine hope and high anticipation of eternal life through Him? Accordingly, the apostle declares, that if Jesus is not risen, "Then they who had fallen asleep in Christ had perished." He does not mean by this, that in that case they had ceased to exist, for upon the principle which has just been stated, he must refer, not

not to the total extinction of *being*, but to the total extinction of *well being*. If it was not a truth that Jesus had risen from the dead, then they who had died in the faith and hope of participating in his glory, had found, on their entrance into the world of spirits, that he was not as they had believed, in the heavenly state, enthroned as their forerunner; they must therefore have experienced all the misery and anguish which could not but result from the complete and everlasting disappointment of hope; and they must also have been doomed to destruction, that is, to the loss of all happiness, and the endurance of all that tribulation of spirit, which is the wages of sin.

Although they had hope in Christ while “in this life,” and were supported and comforted by it amid all their griefs and tribulations, and were therefore of all men on earth the most happy, yet as our estimate of the condition of man must be determined by a reference to his everlasting state, his feelings in this life are not to be named when weighed in the scales of eternity; and therefore, when we embrace in our view the *whole* of their existence, Christians are of all men most miserable, if Christ is not risen. If He is not risen, then the hope of Christians is a mere delusion; and pleasant as it may be, it is all a dream. Though it makes their passage through this life agreeable, yet, were it unfounded, this would be more than balanced by the fearful addition which it would make to their sor-

rows, when at death it would be completely and for ever blasted. Such is our nature, that the present takes much of its character from the past. On this principle, the misery of the rich man in the parable, is represented as aggravated by the remembrance of his former enjoyments. And on the same principle, the fall from a state of the most sanguine and elevated hope of everlasting blessedness, to consummate misery and dismal despair, must have made Christians as much more miserable than other men, as their expectations exceeded those of the latter.

The apostle acts on no such principle as that of those writers against infidelity, who timidly say, ‘Why rob us of our pleasant hopes, though vain? Why awaken us from our dreams of future felicity? Let us enjoy our consoling delusions. It is cruel to deprive us of the only alleviation of human misery.’ So far from this, he wishes the real state of things to be distinctly seen, and will not admit that the belief of any falsehood can be useful. He forms his estimate of a person’s happiness by a reference to his condition in eternity, and not merely by a reference to his feelings in the present scene. He and his fellow apostles were indeed the most happy of men, notwithstanding of all their tribulations, because they were supported and gladdened by the highest hopes of participating in the glory of Christ; but their misery would be proportionably great, if, on entering the eternal world, the whole were to prove a delusion.

It is to no purpose to say, that those who are considered to be subject to future punishment, are never said to have fallen asleep in Christ, and that therefore it cannot be meant to affirm this here. In reply to this, it is sufficient to say, that the apostle is arguing with the Corinthians on some of their own principles, and is endeavouring to convince them that they had fallen into error, by showing them to what their newly adopted sentiments would naturally lead. If Christ were not risen, there could indeed be no such thing as being *in* Christ, in the scripture sense of the expression ; but the object of the reasoning employed here, is to show the inconsistency of the Corinthians with themselves, in admitting one part of the truth of God, and denying another. On the ground that they were right in admitting the immortality of the soul, independently of the resurrection of the body, he argues, that according to that gospel which they professed to believe, this admitted truth sealed their ruin, if there were no resurrection. He is showing them their inconsistency in holding sentiments which were completely at variance with truths, which they themselves acknowledged.

When he says, "Then they also who have fallen asleep in Christ are perished," he is of course speaking hypothetically ; and he refers to those who had died in the faith of the gospel of Christ, and in the hope of eternal blessedness through Him,

but who, on the principles he is opposing, have actually perished. By this we are to understand, not the extinction of their being, but the same thing that is meant by the word *perish*, when our Lord says, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not *perish*, but have everlasting life." Now, it is evident that our Lord means the destruction of happiness alone; and it is clear from the connexion, that the meaning of the apostle here is the same. Whatever may be said about the primary sense of the word, the question is, in what sense it is used by the writer. From the effect of circumstances upon language, this rule must be adopted in numerous instances, and why not in this? The consideration of the following passages will confirm this interpretation of the term. In Matth. x. 28, it is applied to the future misery of the finally condemned; and also in chap. xviii. 14, John iii. 15, 16, and x. 28, and 2 Cor. ii. 15.

It is by no means intended by this to affirm that the soul is *naturally* immortal, for that it cannot be. Nothing can be more evident than that whatever began at any time to exist, must have its existence maintained by the same Power which at first created it, and that the exercise of this power is dependent on the will of the Creator. The Scriptures accordingly do not teach that the soul *cannot* cease to be, but only that it never shall cease to be, be-

cause it is the purpose of God to preserve it in being.

These views of the meaning of the expression, "Ye are yet in your sins," and, "Then they who are fallen asleep in Christ are perished," are quite in accordance with the use made of similar language by the sacred writers. Ezekiel was commanded to warn the wicked, that if he turned not from his evil way he should "die in his iniquity." *a* And our Lord said to the Jews, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." *b* Now, if in these connexions, the expression in question means, that the persons spoken of should die under a load of unpardoned guilt, as well as under the dominion of sin, it must, in the connection in which it is used by the apostle, mean, that if guilt had not been expiated by Christ, it was of course unpardoned; and that therefore all its dismal consequences were yet on their head. The idea of sinners perishing through sin, in the sense of being doomed to suffer its tremendous desert in a future state of existence, was familiar to every one who, from a conviction of guilt and of danger, had fled for refuge to the hope set before him in the gospel, so that the import of the expression in question would instantly be apprehended. This was a mode of reasoning which would at once come

a Ezekiel xxviii. 8.

b John viii. 24.

home to the conscience and the heart,—to the fears and the hopes of the Corinthians, and which was admirably calculated to awaken them from the sinful dreams in which they were indulging.

In opposition to the vain notions which had been started among the Corinthians, the apostle, as an accredited ambassador of Christ, testifies, that as had been proved by the most infallible evidence, the Saviour had indeed risen from the dead, and had become “the first fruits of them that slept.” He declares, that as by one man death had come, so by one man had come the resurrection of the dead. He does not merely say that death and the resurrection came by man, but that each respectively came by an individual of the human kind. Consequently his meaning is, that as by *a* man came death, so by *a* man came the resurrection of the dead. Accordingly, he adds, “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

His argument is this,—Christians acknowledge that Jesus, like Adam, is a public Head. Now, the analogy between these two public characters cannot be complete, unless, as we lost our life by the one, we are to recover it by the other.

It is obvious from the connexion, that he is not speaking of spiritual death on the one hand, or of spiritual life on the other, but of the death and the resurrection of the body. It is doubtless a truth, that spiritual death has come upon all in consequence of their connexion with Adam, and

also that the spiritual life of the redeemed is derived from Christ, but these are not the truths here taught. The subject in question is the resurrection of the body alone, for there is nothing in his reasoning like saying, "Since by a man came the annihilation of the soul, by a man came also the existence of the soul in a future state. The Corinthians, it is also evident, had not denied the Scripture doctrines relative to the spiritual death of mankind, and the derivation of the spiritual life of Christians; and on these therefore the apostle had no call to enter.

His reasoning on the subject of the resurrection, decidedly shews that if Christ had not appeared, the dead had never been raised; for if the resurrection would have taken place though the Saviour had not come, how could he have affirmed that by Him the resurrection came? In that case, he might have said, that by him a *blessed* resurrection came, but not the resurrection itself. But it is of the resurrection in itself that the apostle here speaks, and not of a blessed resurrection in particular. In the latter part of his reasoning, indeed, he dwells particularly on "the resurrection of life," but in the former part of it he speaks of the resurrection in general. This is clear from the nature of the error into which the Corinthians had fallen, which was, that there is no resurrection of the dead at all—verse 12; and from the nature of the answers given to objections in verses 35—39. Nor

does his argument merely respect the *agency* of Christ in *effecting* the resurrection, for the subject in question was not the agency which should be employed in effecting it, but the thing itself; and besides, when he does introduce the subject of this agency, he dwells on the Divine almighty power, and not upon any thing peculiar to Emmanuel. When he says, "In Adam all die," he does not mean that Adam is the agent who *inflicts* death, or who by some agency causes it, but simply that it is in consequence of his sin that men are cut off by the hand of *God*. And in like manner, when he says, "So in Christ shall all be made alive," he does not mean that Christ is the agent in effecting the resurrection, but that it is in consequence of his mediatorial work that there *is to be* a resurrection. It is true that Christ will be the efficient cause of the resurrection, but this is not the truth taught here. It is the truth taught, however, in our Lord's words to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life."^a His object in this declaration was not to inform her how it came to pass that there was *to be* a resurrection and a future state of existence, but to inform her that he himself was the efficient Author of the resurrection, and the spring of all life, as having the principles of life within himself, and at his own command. The

^a John xi. 25.

abstract terms, resurrection and life, are put as the strongest expression of their cause and Author.

The case is different, however, in the reasoning of Paul, which we are now considering. The question here is, how comes it about that there is to be a resurrection of the dead, and not, who is to be the agent in effecting it. He is speaking to Christians, and therefore he dwells particularly on the "resurrection of the just;" but it was impossible to discuss the subject without introducing the resurrection as such, and of course the general resurrection of mankind; for the question involved the whole bearings of the re-animation of the dead. As through the sin of Adam all mankind are appointed to die, so through Christ, death, so far as it is the fruit of Adam's transgression, is completely done away, the effects of Christ's death and resurrection being thus far co-extensive with the fruits of Adam's disobedience. Death, considered as the everlasting separation of soul and body, is altogether abolished by the heavenly Adam. Now, the fact that in consequence of the appearing, and work of the Redeemer, there shall be a resurrection, both of the just and unjust, was fitted in particular to show the fallacy of the reasoning, which would affix to the term merely a figurative meaning. It would no doubt be argued by the Corinthians, that a moral change from spiritual death to spiritual life, is called a resurrection; and had been so by the apostle himself:

and likewise that on a similar principle, a revival of religion is so denominated, and that therefore the term did not refer to a revival of the body. But the fact that "the many that sleep in the dust of the earth," even all mankind, are to be raised from the slumbers of the grave, showed that the term must be applied to the body; for in regard to those who shall awake "to everlasting shame and contempt," it could not have a mere figurative meaning, because such shall be raised as well as under its guilt, under the complete dominion of sin.^a They shall come forth from their graves "to the resurrection of condemnation,"^b and of course in a condition of spiritual death. The fact, again, that this general resurrection from the dead, was the result of Christ's appearance in the world, and of His resurrection from the dead, would serve to convince them, that though they allowed that *He* had risen, they had not understood the import of his victory over death. His resurrection imports, that the judgment of the world is committed to him; that he will judge those by whom he was judged, and finish the work which was given him to do, in the final destruction of his enemies, and the complete salvation of his people.^c The error of the Corinthians, not only overturned the Gospel, considered as the hope of christians, but considered as the message of mercy to an ungodly

^a Daniel xii. 2.

^b John v. 21.

^c Verse 14---28.

world. It not only bereaved the former of their dearest hope ; but it hindered the latter, from preceiving the relation in which they were placed to him “ who shall judge the quick and the dead, at “ his appearing and Kingdom. By his resurrection, “ God hath given assurance unto *all* men, “ that he hath appointed a day, in which he will “ by Him judge the world in righteousness.” *a* Now, the authority given him to execute judgment, includes a power to revive the dead, and to cite before his tribunal, both the righteous and the wicked, for all must appear at his judgment seat, to receive the things done in the body, according to that they have done, whether it be good or bad. *b* Such, then, is the nature of Christ’s administration as the Ruler of providence for the sake of his church, that in order to the accomplishment of the plans of heaven, through him, there is to be a general resurrection of the dead, and also a general judgment.

No change is made in the mode of punishment, without a corresponding change in the dispensation, under which moral agents are placed ; and therefore, as infants have not been guilty of abusing that dispensation which has followed the constitution, established with Adam, they cannot be subjected to that kind of punishment, which arises from it. On the contrary, the fact that they receive through

a Acts xvii. 31. *b* 2 Cor. v. 10.

Christ, the blessing of a resurrection, when combined with the consideration that they have never sinned against his salvation ; shows that the other blessings of his reign will be granted them. The second death is not immediately connected with the “one offence” of Adam, but is denounced against the “many offences,” of which men are themselves, personally guilty. Yet though this death is not *immediately* connected with the sin of Adam, it certainly has a connexion with it through the medium of men’s personal guilt ; for in consequence of their connexion with him, they are exposed to corruption, and so universally come, (though in a way which cannot be explained,) to be depraved creatures ; and the evil principles engendered in their hearts, produce “fruit unto death,” even eternal death, in the resurrection state. This death is the wages of personal transgression, for men shall be judged at last according to their deeds done in the body, and in the body raised from the dead either be happy or miserable.

It follows then, that since, if the Redeemer had not appeared, there had been no resurrection, the first sin of Adam did not include punishment in the body in a future state. The arrangements of God in regard to the punishment of sin, vary so far as their circumstances are concerned, according to the nature of his several dispensations with Adam and Christ. And therefore, since there was no provision for the resurrection of the body, in

the dispensation established with the former ; of course punishment in the embodied state in a future condition of being, after a resurrection, could not be included in the curse that was to follow his first transgression. I mean not, as has been already stated, to enter on the consideration of all that it *did* include beyond death and the grave, but rest satisfied with endeavouring to prove, that it did not include the punishment of the body in a future state. The resurrection of the body, when considered in itself, is always represented as the *removal*, in part at least, of the curse which has followed the offence of Adam, instead of being represented as a part of its infliction. In itself, therefore, it is a blessing, as death in itself is an evil ; and though it eventually will prove a curse unto many, this does not alter its nature. Now, it was only in as far as it is a restoration from death, considered as a part of the curse which has followed the sin of Adam, that he was called to oppose it to the effect of his rebellion. In itself it is this, and is thus therefore a blessing ; and accordingly, it is never in this respect represented as an evil. The painful and shameful circumstances which shall be connected with it, in the case of the wicked, will wholly result from their own personal sins. Viewed simply as the result of Christ's coming, it is a benefit and not a curse. The apostle connects it most clearly as a blessing with the resurrection

of Christ, in the same way that he connects death as a curse with the sin of Adam, when he tells us, that death came by the latter, and the resurrection by the former ; and that as in the one all die in the body, so through the other shall all be yet made alive in the body. Not only is he not speaking of spiritual life in the soul,—he is not even speaking of the existence or the immortality of the soul at all. The latter he by no means connects with the coming of Christ, but the former he does. He, indeed, dwells on the resurrection of the righteous, because he is writing to a Christian Church, but his argument necessarily includes the resurrection of all.

Accordingly, he says, that “ Every one shall arise in his own order.” This intimation is made by him, to show that though the resurrection of Christ is the pledge that “ all who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,” yet the time and the order in which each shall arise will be so fixed, as seems meet to the Almighty. All the circumstances connected with the resurrection and the final judgment, will be so arranged as best to display the character of God, and to accomplish his purposes, in relation to the plan of redemption. As he fixes the time at which he executes the original sentence of death, so he fixes that at which he shall raise the dead, according as his complicated plans require.

Christ is already risen by himself “ as the first

born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." He has risen as the first fruits of the dead, for as surely as the first fruits were an indication and pledge of the harvest, so surely was his resurrection the proof and pledge of the resurrection of the dead. It was proper that he should rise *by himself*, that he might appear as the first-born Chief, who, as the immortal Son of God, and the consecrated High Priest of his house, was to enter into heaven itself, there to exercise his mediatorial functions as a Priest upon his throne. The grant of the kingdom to him, was not to be deferred till the general resurrection: It was to be given him on the accomplishment of his expiatory work, and therefore he was to rise, not with the rest of the dead, but by himself as a forerunner of others. The accomplishment of his priestly work, and the exercise of the government with which he was to be entrusted, required that he should rise from the dead, both over the Church and the world at large, and enter heaven in a spiritual and glorious body, for in a body like the present he could not have officiated there. Flesh and blood in their present state cannot inherit the kingdom of God; and the dominion granted him included the government of all worlds for the sake of his Church, until the gracious purposes of God were accomplished, and therefore it behoved him not only to rise from the dead, but to rise first and by himself, that he might carry into effect the mighty plans of Jehovah.

Nothing can be more evident than that it is at the second coming of Christ, that what is here meant by the resurrection is to take place. The denial of this involves the unscriptural doctrine of the sleep of the soul. Departed spirits can be said to sleep, only as it regards their bodies; and Christ, by rising from the dead, became, as far as this sleep is concerned, the first fruits of their bodies alone.

From the order in which the resurrection is to take place, it follows, that every man shall rise in his own band, or company. Indeed, the word here rendered *order*, often signifies an army drawn up, —a legion, a cohort, and may be here used in the sense of band, or company. But whatever may be thought as to this, the scope of the passage shows that the idea in question is included in its meaning. Christ, the first fruits and the Chief, rose alone by himself; afterwards they that are Christ's, shall rise in one grand company at his coming. This implies that the wicked shall rise in another company; but as the immediate object of the apostle was to establish the faith of the Christians to whom he was writing, in the blessed nature of the gospel, he does not directly mention this. Nor is this the only reason why he does not directly introduce it here; his arguments had been chiefly taken from those views of the origin of the resurrection which exhibit it, as it is *in itself*, or, in other words, what is included in it considered as the fruit of

Christ's coming, and not what it will eventually prove to many, in consequence of their refusing that grace with which it is connected, and of which in itself it is a fruit. He accordingly opposes it to the death which has entered by the sin of Adam, rather than as the introduction of the second death, which will follow the personal offences of the wicked.

Instead of dwelling on the subject as it bears upon the latter class, he goes on to declare that then cometh the end, when Christ will deliver up the mediatorial kingdom of providence, which was granted him for the sake of his spiritual and everlasting kingdom, the Church; because then all enemies shall be subdued, and the redeemed completely saved, and gloriously blessed, and all the purposes for which the kingdom of providence was granted him, completely accomplished. Now, it is needless to stop here to show that this includes the resurrection of the wicked, as well as of the righteous, and also that general judgment which shall seal the overthrow of the former, as enemies of Christ who are to be made "his footstool," while it will perfect the redemption and glory of the latter. It was natural for the apostle, after he had exhibited the connexion which subsists between the resurrection of Christ, and that of the dead, to give a view of the final issue of that new dispensation which has followed the breach of the constitution established with Adam; and which is the re-

sult of the appearance and glory of the Saviour. The termination of the present system in the general judgment, will be accompanied with the ruin of many; but this will be the effect, not of the resurrection in itself, nor the effect by natural necessity of that dispensation of which it is a part, but of the wickedness of man. As the blessings of Providence are abused by men, and thus become curses, so the blessing of the resurrection will to many prove ultimately an aggravation of their misery. All good is from God, and all is good that is from him; all evil is from the creature alone. *a*

Now, apply this reasoning to the subject in question:—It appears, that the threatening against the first sin of Adam, did not include suffering in the body in the resurrection state; for had not Christ appeared, there had been no such state, and of course no punishment of the kind. It necessarily follows, then, that as deceased infants have not been guilty of actual sin, and are therefore only liable to the consequences of Adam's one offence, they cannot be exposed to more than was denounced against that sin. They of course, cannot be liable to suffering in a future *embodied* state, for this were to inflict more than was threatened. We know from Scripture, that all the human race

a James i. 13—17.

shall be raised from the dead ; and therefore deceased infants as well as adults, shall be raised. All who are in the grave, shall hear the voice of the Judge, and shall come forth. As in Adam all die, so through Christ shall be made alive, whether infants or adults. To what, then, shall infants be raised ? Not to suffer in the body, for we have seen that to this they were not liable to the first sentence ; and surely it will not for a moment be imagined by any, that the only thing derived by such, from the advent of Christ, is, that they are, in consequence of it, doomed to a kind of suffering from which had he not come, they had been free. Never will the Redeemer give occasion for such to say, that to them he came not as a Saviour but as a destroyer. If they be raised at all, as certainly they shall, they must, then, be raised in order that they may inherit everlasting life. If the foregoing premises are granted, and I see not how on Scripture ground they can be denied, this conclusion cannot be resisted. Since they never have been accountable agents, they cannot be exposed to more than the relative consequences of Adam's sin ; from these the resurrection through Christ delivers them, so far as external circumstances are concerned, and what remains but that they are called to everlasting life in his kingdom ; and of course are made meet for it, by a change of nature.

At what time children come to be account-

able agents, cannot be exactly determined. Some reach this state at one age, and some at another, according to the degrees of their natural faculties, and the means of developing them. It is, however certain, that till the faculties of a child are so far developed as to connect accountability with them, it cannot be a capable subject of moral government. It is pleasant to think, however, that before children can be the proper subjects of the moral government of God, they are, and even in the earliest stages of their being, capable of being the subject of his sovereign mercy and goodness. None but such as have been here the subjects of his moral government, can be judged according to the deeds done in the body, and therefore, on such as cannot thus be judged, the second death can have no power.

SECTION IV.

IT may perhaps be proper to make some more observations on the argument maintained, in the preceding Section, with a view in particular, to meet certain objections which have been made to its leading principle.

From what has been said, it appears, that the death denounced in the original threatening, included more than merely returning to the dust, and yet did not include a miserable resurrection. If all included in it had been the total annihilation of our first parents, then, of course, our very existence itself had been the fruit of Christ's mediation, and if so, we could have no connexion with Adam, except as our natural root. This notion, therefore, involves the principle, that our present unhappy condition is not the fruit of the sin of Adam, and leads to the denial of original sin, and of all that is connected with it. The salvation of Christ is deliverance, not from evils into which he himself brought us, but from evils in which we were involved before his appearance. He came "to seek out, and to save that which was lost." If our present existence, in the whole of its relations, is entirely the result of the mediation of Christ, then there are difficulties in accounting

for our present character, which are much greater than any which arise from its being connected with our relation to the first man.

It has been objected, that the same words are applied to the death which is common to man and to beast; but it ought to be remembered, that the Scriptures expressly distinguish between the result of the death of the former, and that of the death of the latter, by telling us, that the spirit of the one "goeth upwards," and that of the latter "downwards." *a*

The proper rule of interpretation is, to determine the sense of the expressions that relate to death in every instance; by the connexion in which they occur, and according to the nature of the subjects to whom they are applied; the relation in which they stand, and the arrangement of the dispensations under which they are respectively placed. If it be asked, 'Why suppose that in the first threatening, Adam was taught to look beyond the literal meaning of the word death?' The question may be answered, by asking another, 'Why suppose that when the law was just given and enforced, by the threatening of death, that nothing was to be understood by him of that punishment, which in all ages since, has been represented in Scripture, as the principal ingredient, of the death

a Ecclesiastes iii. 21.

denounced against sin?" There is nothing unreasonable in supposing, that Adam, who must have known the distinction between his soul and his body, understood that when the dust returned to the dust as it was, the spirit should return to God who gave it. *a* Neither is there the least difficulty in conceiving that he would anticipate the fearful consequences of his sin, in the separate state.

The term *death*, having been employed to denote the loss of natural life, which is the greatest of present evils, is employed to express the whole that shall follow it, in the case of rational and sinful creatures. Being the greatest of visible evils, it is used to denote the greatest of all evils whatsoever; and hence it is employed to denote that misery, which shall be endured by the wicked in the embodied state, after the resurrection, which accordingly is denominated the second death. Thus, our Lord applied it to to a state of misery in the world to come, when he said, "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. *b* The loss of holy blessedness is certainly the privation of life, in its highest and best sense. Now, as it is used to denote that misery which shall be endured by the wicked in an embodied state, there can be nothing unnatural in considering it as in-

a Ecclesiastes xii. 7.

b John viii. 51.

cluding that misery which in the separate state follows its literal infliction.

Death and annihilation are two very different things, when applied to a creature such as man. He is a being constituted by the union of two substances, in themselves essentially different. The soul by itself is not the *man*, but only a component part of him, and therefore, however it may subsist after separation from the body, the man, as such, is dead. Now, this is the death, so far as existence is concerned, which is contained in the sentence pronounced against the first transgression of Adam. A separate spirit is not a mixed being, as man considered as such is, and of the nature of its life, and its modes of action, we can know nothing. Such a change on the mode of existence, may well be termed death, particularly when connected with the loss of that holy spiritual life, which consists in the enjoyment of the favour and image of God ; and which was the principal glory of the paradisiacal state.

To confine the immortality of the soul to the children of believers, or to connect it with the participation of a sacred rite, is utterly unscriptural ; for it appears, that independently of the gospel, the spirit had existed in a separate state. The question, it ought to be observed, does not respect the natural immortality of the soul ; for though it may be true that it cannot die as bodies do, by a dissolution of its parts, yet, its existence must entirely depend

upon the will of the Creator. On the ground of His will, and not on metaphysical speculations in regard to its nature, do the Scriptures rest the doctrine of the immortality of the spirit. If, then, the death denounced against the offence of Adam, did not include its annihilation, it follows, that its *bare existence* cannot be the result of the redemption of Christ.

As the Saviour appeared in order to deliver from the effects of the sin of Adam, as well as from those of other transgressions, he must have endured the substance of the death which hath followed it; but his human spirit did not for a moment cease to be in a state of conscious existence. He expressed his hope that God would not leave his soul in the state of departed spirits, nor suffer his body to see corruption in the grave, and in the agonies of death he commended his spirit into the hands of his Father. Had it not been for sin, the soul of man had never been separated from his body, and therefore the appearance of the Redeemer's spirit in the mansions of departed souls, even though in a state of enjoyment, was a proof that he had suffered for sin, though not his own. While his body and spirit were separated, he was not completely freed from the effects of the curse, and hence the importance attached to his resurrection. Now, we may consider the circumstances in which he was placed, as illustrative of the nature of the original sentence against sin. Accordingly,

the apostle directs us to view the subject in this light, when he says, "As it is appointed to man once to die, (that is, to die *but* once,) so Christ was (but) once offered to bear the sins of many."

It has been objected, that the term *resurrection* is sometimes employed to signify a future state in general, and particularly by our Lord, in Matth. xxii. 31, where he reasons with the Sadducees, who, it appears from Acts xxiii. 8, denied, not merely the resurrection of the body, but a future state altogether, whether in a separate or a resurrection state. I do not stop to inquire into all the bearings of our Lord's reasoning in the passage referred to, but rest satisfied with shewing, that there is nothing in this view of it which in the least militates against the sentiments that have just been stated.

The argument of our Lord, according to this view of his reasoning, must be as follows :—"God is not the God of the dead, (which in the sense of the Sadducees meant the annihilated) but of the living. But God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and therefore they are not dead, but living." In what sense, then, are they alive? Not as to their bodies, for these have been buried for ages. They are alive, therefore, only as to their spirits. It is thus evident, that in the time of Moses these patriarchs were existing in that state of blessedness which is implied in having Jehovah for

their God. Though in respect of us they are dead, they are yet alive to God, whom they still serve and enjoy, for all live to Him. *a*

It is granted, however, by those who take this view of the subject, that in Matth. xxii. 28, 29, 30, and Mark xii. 23, 24, 25, there is an express reference to the resurrection of the body, because we have there introduced the objection of the Sadducees, who, though they denied the doctrine of a future state entirely, thought it better to oppose it, by showing, as they imagined, an absurdity in the doctrine of the resurrection.

Now, even on this view of the passage in question, it is evident that the term *resurrection*, though sometimes employed to signify a future state in general, is not employed to signify a bringing back from a state of non-existence, or from a state of torpor and insensibility, for it is applied to a condition of conscious existence in the separate state between death and the resurrection of the body. It is allowed by those who support this view of it, that when applied to the dead, the word rendered *resurrection*, signifies a renewal of life to them in whatever manner this happens. According to this view of it, when it respects the present state of the dead, it denotes that new mode of existence in the spirit which follows the death of the body, and

a Luke xx. 38.

when applied to that change which shall be effected at the second coming of Christ, it denotes the resurrection of the body, and the life which shall follow.

It is to no purpose, therefore, granting this view of the passage to be just, to reason, that because the term *resurrection* is used to denote a future state of existence, there had been no such state in any sense, if there had been no resurrection of the body. So far from this being a just inference, even according to the view now mentioned, the term is actually applied to the existence of the spirit in a future and separate state. Now, as it is never used to signify the bringing back of any from a state of non-existence or insensibility, as to the soul, it cannot be maintained, that if there had been no resurrection of the body, the spirit had not been immortal. Death is indeed called a sleep, but this is a metaphorical mode of expression, derived from the resemblance which a dead body bears to the body of a person asleep. The use of the language appears also to have taken its rise from the hope of the resurrection, between which and a person awaking out of sleep there is a degree of analogy, both as it regards the state of the body, and the inexplicable manner in which the mind had acted, independently of its aid.

When we think, however, of the import of the high relation which is included in having Jehovah for our God, we must be convinced that it com-

prehends our whole persons. Now, as he calls himself the God of the patriarchs in their whole persons, he will certainly prove himself worthy of that appellation, by blessing them in their whole persons, which it would be impossible to do, were he to suffer their bodies to remain eternally under the power of death and corruption. The reasoning of the apostle, in Heb. xi, 16, is, that he would be ashamed to be called the God of any for whom he had prepared no permanent inheritance, and the city which he prepared for the patriarchs, is that celestial habitation into which they shall in their whole persons be introduced at the resurrection of the just. It follows, then, that the argument of our Lord *indirectly* proves, that there shall be a resurrection of the body.

When we consider that the resurrection of the body is entirely the fruit of the coming of Christ, that the knowledge of it is chiefly, though not exclusively, derived from the New Testament Scriptures, and that as the Greek classic authors had no idea of the thing, they had no word which expressly denoted it, we cannot be surprised that the terms chosen to express it admit of considerable latitude in their interpretation, while, at the same time, they naturally enough convey the proper idea. The connexion and scope of the passages where the usual words are employed, will, to every candid and attentive reader, determine the sense. Though, therefore, the Greek substantive which

is almost invariably used when the resurrection of the body is meant, is sometimes employed to signify a separate or future state in general, there is nothing in this which obscures the subject, or that in the least invalidates the foregoing reasoning, in regard to its origin and bearings.

But though the term *resurrection* is sometimes used to denote a future state of existence in general, it is certainly more frequently employed to denote the revival of the body. If the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Jesus from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. *a* We look for the Saviour from heaven, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like to his glorious body. *b* In 1 Corinthians xv. the resurrection of the body is the great subject of discourse. That which was sown in corruption, dishonour, and weakness, shall be raised incorruptible, glorious, and vigorous; that which was sown an animal body, shall be raised a spiritual body. "As we have borne (in our body) the image of the earthly Adam, we shall also bear (in the resurrection body) the image of the heavenly Adam. It is true that we bear the moral image of disobedient Adam, and that we shall bear the perfect moral and spiritual image of the Savi-

a Romans viii. 11.

b Phil. iii. 21.

our, but these are not the subjects in question here. The apostle is reasoning on the subject of the resurrection body, and on our future resemblance in it to the glorified body of Christ.

The view which has been given of the original threatening is similar to that which has been given of it by Dr Owen. In replying to a particular question, he introduces the case of man after the fall, and says, that if the punishment threatened had been inflicted to the utmost of what was contained in it, then man had died immediately, both temporally and eternally, and had been placed in the same relation to the law that a criminal is who has been finally executed, and has thereby been subjected to its whole penalty. *a* Now, by dying temporally, he obviously means the death of the body, and by dying eternally the misery of the soul in the separate state, and not the second death in the resurrection state, for his language leaves no room for this.

It may be objected, that though this conclusion be just, yet, as the death denounced against the offence of Adam left the soul exposed to the evil of separation from God in the world of spirits, infants dying in infancy may therefore be exposed to this evil in the spirit, though not to misery in a future embodied state. In reply to this it is suffi-

a Owen, on Justification, Chap. xii. page 381—383.

cient to say, that granting the latter inference in relation to children to be just, yet the view which has been given of the connexion between Christ and the resurrection, decidedly shows that it does not follow that as things *now* stand, infants dying in infancy shall be doomed to exclusion from the light of God's countenance in the separate state. To nothing more than this could they, according to this reasoning, have been exposed, even had no Saviour appeared; and therefore, as all who shall be raised from the dead to eternal bliss, shall have previously been in a condition of happiness with God in the separate state, and as infants shall all be raised from the dead, and if so, can only, as we have seen, be raised to blessedness, it undeniably follows that their spirits must be with Christ in a state of enjoyment between death and the resurrection. The Scriptures never speak as if any shall be raised to blessedness whose spirits in the separate state were in the abodes of the miserable, but, on the contrary, invariably represent them as persons who in the world of spirits were previously with God in a condition of enjoyment, though certainly not of enjoyment equal in degree to what shall be obtained at the resurrection unto life. This is evident from our Lord's promise to the thief on the cross, that he would be with Him in paradise on the very day of his crucifixion; from the way in which the expiring Redeemer commended his Spirit to his Father, and from the

strong desire expressed by the apostle Paul to depart and be absent from the body, that he might be present with his Lord.^a We accordingly read of the spirits of just men made perfect, we find Stephen saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my *spirit*;" and in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, we are taught, that their condition in the separate state, after their death, corresponded with what it should afterwards and for ever be—subsequent to the resurrection. More than this I need not say, as I do not mean to discuss the subject of the full extent of the consequences of Adam's sin in a future state. The full discussion of that subject is unnecessary here, because the decision of the question in hand does not depend on any particular view which may be taken of the separate state considered in itself, or of the consequence of the sin of Adam in that condition; for whatever that state would have been had not Christ come, it is evident from the Scriptures which have been adduced, that to infants it must *now* be a condition of enjoyment.

But it may well be asked, why reason on what had been the state of infants if a Saviour had not been provided, because, though it be granted that the constitution established with Adam provided for the existence of every individual that has since been born into the world, it does not follow that

^a Luke xxiii. 43. 46. Phil. i. 23. 2 Cor. v. 6. 7. 8.

their circumstances would have been in all respects what they are now, even had not the Redeemer appeared. For any thing that we know, none of the human race would in that case have been cut off in infancy. The same ends certainly which are now answered by the death of infants, would not, in all respects at least, have been answered by it in the circumstances supposed. If it be said, Why even suppose that such a difference could have existed in the arrangements of God, relative to the time and the manner of the death of mankind? It may be replied, Why do those who take a different view of the final condition of infants, reason at all on what would have taken place had not Christ been manifested? If they conceive themselves warranted to reason on the latter supposition—a supposition which involves such a remarkable difference between what in that case had been the arrangements of God, and what are now His dispensations, can it be deemed unwarrantable even but to hint at the possibility, that if this great difference had indeed existed, it had been accompanied with a somewhat different arrangement as to the *period* of dissolution. The truth is, I am very unfond of such speculations, but it is at times necessary to say something on them, in order to show that the inferences which are drawn from them in relation to the final condemnation of infants, are by no means entitled to the oracular character ascribed to them. We are too ready to

start curious questions, and then to dispute about different solutions, while we neglect the obvious practical instruction of Scripture.

The justice of God, it is obvious, requires that he mark his hatred of sin by the execution of the righteous sentence of his law, but under a dispensation of mercy other ends besides this are answered by the infliction of death. Must not, then, the time chosen for this infliction correspond with the ends to be answered by it, and if so, is it not reasonable to think that under a different dispensation a different arrangement had been adopted? Is it reasonable to suppose, that if the dispensation of the gospel had not been established, the lot of every individual in this life would have been the same *in every particular* what it now is, without the least degree of difference, notwithstanding of the immense difference which there is between this dispensation and one of an opposite description. Yet without going this length, it cannot consistently be denied, that in the case of many, a difference might have existed as to the period of dissolution. There is really then no need for entering on subjects which in the present state of things serve rather to excite prejudices and to increase our difficulties, than to elucidate the truth, and to set the mind at rest.

The view which has here been given of the import of the original threatening, seems to free from those difficulties which attach to the opinion, that it involved what is called the second death; and

also from those which attach to the opinion, that it included nothing more than natural death. On both these opinions I shall now offer a few observations.

In support of the former opinion, it has been argued, that in Romans v. 21, the apostle opposes the eternal life which comes by Christ, to the death which comes by sin, and that therefore the two must correspond. But the apostle is there summing up all his reasoning on the subject of the introduction and reign, both of sin and of righteousness, and is therefore speaking of sin in general, including all the personal offences of men, and not merely the one offence of the first man. Accordingly, he had said in the preceding verse, that the law entered that sin might abound; that is, that it might appear by the connexion established between the curse and every personal transgression, that there were other grounds of forfeiture besides the offence of Adam. But where personal offences or causes of forfeiture thus abounded, grace did much more abound, in redeeming not only from the death introduced by the sin of Adam, but from the tremendous consequences of innumerable personal transgressions, and calling to the enjoyment of the celestial paradise. The word *death* is accordingly often used to express the punishment of personal guilt. *a*

Besides, the death introduced must have con-

tinued for ever, had not mercy interposed, because the first constitution did not, and indeed could not, make provision for deliverance from its curse, so that as far as *duration* is concerned, even the effect the first sin may well be opposed to eternal life.

From what has been already said of the nature of the second death, in the embodied state, it is clear, that the resurrection of the body could not fit departed infants for enduring it. We can conceive of them being thereby subjected to physical pain, but this, considered apart from what we have seen to be the essence of future punishment, is not a fulfilment of the Divine denunciation. It is true, that what we call bodily affliction, is in reality a mental sensation,—and that its effects upon the mind are generally as evident as those which its causes produce on the body. But still, this is quite a different thing from mental anguish, springing from the reflections of a guilty conscience. The great seat of punishment will be the mind itself; and the connexion between the state of the present body and that of the mind, shews that a particular kind of body may be fitted to be the means of heightening that mental distress which is the soul of the curse.

But though we can easily conceive, from what we know of the present influence of the body on the ideas and feelings of the mind, how a particular kind of body may in the future state be the means of so influencing the latter, as to give rise to

the most vivid views of all that is connected with sin, and thus in part to occasion that mental distress in which the essence of future misery will consist; yet it is not conceivable how any kind of body could cause similar distress in the mind of departed infants, who, not having actually sinned, cannot in the nature of things be the subjects of the remorse and other mental sensations which a consciousness of personal guilt must produce. Future punishment, as has just been stated, is not a merely arbitrary infliction, and it never can arise from a false impression. In the fearful abode of the condemned, there shall be weepings and wailings, in reflecting on the deeds personally done in the body. Punishment and sin are not joined together by a mere act of authority, for the judicial and natural effects of character are united. Now, it is inconceivable how the worm of conscience could exist in a mind free from personal crime. It does not consist with fact, that even Christians feel in regard to the sin of Adam, in *exactly* the same way in every respect, that they do respecting their own sins; and the Scriptures neither suppose nor enjoin that they should. Deeply humbled they ought certainly to be, that their first parents sinned against God, and grieved they ought to be at the dishonour which was thereby done to him, but still they cannot feel in the same way that they do, in regard to their own sins. The latter they must trace to a depraved mind, which, though the con-

sequence of their connection with Adam, is not the effect of compulsion or natural necessity, for as soon as they are capable of acting, it appears evidently to be the choice of the heart; and the conviction of this, by which they virtually approve of the first offence, must cause in them the deepest contrition.

There is a connexion, indeed, between the sin of Adam and the final misery of the wicked, but it is not direct and immediate; it is evidently only through the medium of that corruption of nature which has followed our connexion with him, exerting itself in personal and actual sins. The scriptures, accordingly, never represent everlasting misery in the body, in the resurrection state, as inflicted on any of the children of Adam, simply for his one offence. On the contrary, they invariably represent it, not as the execution of a sentence pronounced in the days of Adam, as is the case with natural death and other evils, but as the execution of the sentence pronounced in the last judgment on actual transgressors, and on the ground of their own personal offences; and hence they are said to be treated according to their works, that is, the deeds which they have done in the body. *a*

I shall now advert for a moment to the opinion,

a Eccles. xii 14. Matth. xxv. 30—41. Rom. ii. 12—16.

2 Cor. v. 10. 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. Rev. xx. 12, 14, 15.

that the original threatening included only natural death.

It has been said, that Christ did not appear in order to prevent the execution of the threatening denounced against the offence of Adam, but to deliver from the death which must be inflicted because of it, and to raise to a higher life than that which was lost. It may therefore be argued, that if the curse included any thing beyond the grave, then to that, whatever it is, must departed infants be subjected. In support of this sentiment, it has been said, that natural death, and the sorrows and troubles which precede it, come upon mankind universally notwithstanding of the atonement of Christ, and that therefore the original constitution must be considered as still so far in force, that its full penalty must be endured, since even Christians are not exempted from its curse. But there are several mistakes in this reasoning, as will appear from the following considerations. It might as well be argued, that because the original constitution made no provision for deliverance in case of guilt; and the punishment denounced, whatever it was, must therefore have been eternal; that on this account it is impossible for men to be saved at all, because, if salvation be granted, then the punishment denounced cannot be fully endured, because it is not suffered *for ever*. Suppose it to have been only natural death, then according to this principle there could never have been a resurrection.

There is a wide difference, it ought to be observed, between what a thing is in itself, or in its origin, and what it becomes through the overruling gracious providence of God. Natural death, and the troubles which precede it, are doubtless in themselves the fruit of the curse which followed the transgression of Adam, but to all the redeemed they are converted into blessings, for "all things are theirs, whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come." All things, and of course the ordinary sufferings of life, as well as afflictions for the sake of the truth, are made to work together for their present and final good. It is true, that to the ungodly they will eventually prove a curse, but this is owing to the non-improvement or the abuse of them. After the revelation of mercy in the first promise God declared to man—that the ground was cursed for his sake—that in sorrow he should eat of it all the days of his life—that he should eat his bread by the sweat of his brow, and that as he came from the dust, so to the dust he should return: But while in this sentence we see judgment following sin, we also see the Divine mercy and goodness. By taking away many allurements and fascinations from the world, and making it the scene of trouble and disquietude, God has taught mankind the vanity of looking to it as a portion, and has directed them to that provision which is made in the gospel, for the deliverance and the blessedness of all

who embrace it. His goodness as well as his righteousness is apparent in the appointment, that man should eat his bread as the fruit of his toil, for there would be much more wickedness and wretchedness in the world, if men could subsist without labour. Often, accordingly, does he bless the afflictions of life for bringing the sinner to himself, and as the means of endearing to him the glad tidings of redemption. The troubles, therefore, which have followed the fall, serve the double purpose of expressing the Divine displeasure against sin, and of exciting the sinner to embrace the salvation of God ; while in the case of all who embrace it, they are the means of trying and cherishing those holy principles which make meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

There is nothing, then, in the prevalence of suffering and death in consequence of the sin of Adam, which militates against the statement, that in consequence of the mediation of Christ, mankind are placed under a new dispensation, by which evils are often overruled for good, and that, although infants are not delivered from suffering and natural death, they are delivered from all the effects of this sin in a future state. Though some of the effects of the sin of Adam come upon men, notwithstanding of the coming of Christ, it does not follow, that every evil which was comprehended in the original curse that was denounced against it, must infallibly come upon them. The measure of its

effects, which is allowed to afflict them, and the measure of them which is withheld, are determined, the one by God as the righteous Judge, and the other by him as a sovereign Benefactor.

There is nothing more inconsistent in supposing, that God has not inflicted the whole of the evils comprehended in this curse, than there is in saying, that though he has inflicted them all as to *kind*, he has not inflicted them *for ever*; for the latter is no more a full infliction than the former.

It is true, that Christ came not to restore us to the life and the paradise which Adam enjoyed, but to raise us to an infinitely higher happiness; yet it by no means follows, that it is correct to say, that we sustain the everlasting *loss* of the earthly Eden. Such an idea cannot for a moment be entertained, when we think of the inheritance of the heavenly paradise. Mistakes on this subject have sometimes arisen, from considering the sacrifice of Christ as an exact equivalent for value to be received, instead of considering it as an infinitely meritorious work, a grand manifestation of the Divine righteousness, and a general medium through which the Divine goodness may flow to the guilty in an honourable manner.

In the very nature of the thing, the law could make no provision for a remedy. Such, however, is the transcendent glory of the work of Christ, that the spirit of the law is as essentially preserved, the great ends of retributive justice are as fully answer-

ed, and the authority and honour of the divine government as completely secured by His mediation, as if the penalty had, according to the strict letter of the law, been inflicted on the guilty themselves. In the appointment of a mediator, we see God acting, not in opposition to the law, but beyond the line of it; and in raising the Redeemer from the dead, and giving him glory, we see the reward of an obedience infinitely surpassing what could ever have been yielded, by the most exalted and holy of creatures. There is a grandeur in this dispensation which is altogether removed from that minutely calculating process, which has sometimes been connected with it.

In the very nature of the thing, the redemption of Christ comprehends both complete deliverance from all kinds of evil, and the enjoyment of happiness relatively perfect, in the world to come; but with regard to the present world, it degrades the subject, nicely to calculate the proportion of evil, from which the merit of his sacrifice is sufficient to redeem. And even in regard to the world to come, man will perish in consequence of any deficiency in the worth of the atonement.

In virtue of the promise, "I will make him my first born," Christ is constituted heir of all things, *a* for "all power in heaven and on earth is commit-

a Psalm lxxxix. 27. Heb. i. 2.

ted to him." *a* His interposition on the entrance of sin, fixed the world under a dispensation of mercy, forbearance and patience; and all things connected with it, whether in the infliction of evil, or the bestowment of good are so regulated, as best to accomplish the ends of his administration.

It is wrong, therefore, to say, that the things of this life are no more blessings to mankind at large, than the food of condemned criminals, during the time that their execution is delayed; which is only intended to preserve them in being till it take place, and cannot therefore be considered in the light of a benefit. This is true, indeed, of rebels who are condemned without the least hope of forgiveness, but it is not true of rebels, to whom a proclamation of mercy is made, on their being reconciled to their Prince, and whose lives are spared that they may have space for repentance. *b* To them the necessities of life are in themselves blessings. The condition of impenitent actual transgressors, on leaving the world, may be compared to that of a malefactor who is laid up in prison against the day of execution; but the condition of mankind in the present state by no means corresponds with this. The mediation of Christ is a grand general manifestation of the righteousness of God, by which the

a Matt. xxviii. 18. Phil. ii. 7. 8. 9. *b* Rom. ii. 4.

2 Pet. iii. 9. Rev. ii. 21.

claims of justice are satisfied, and the glory of his government is fully maintained in the exercise of mercy towards mankind, in all the ways in which he shall see meet to display it. *a*

Since, then, the atonement is a general remedy arising from the infinite glory of the Saviour's person and character, and since the plan of redemption, though in strict accordance with the spirit of the law, is not regulated by its provisions, it is easy to see how, notwithstanding of the death of Christ, a portion of the effects of the sin of Adam come even on the saved themselves; and how it is that his redemption includes much more than a restoration to the state from which man by transgression fell. On the same principle, it is easy to see how a dispensation of mercy has been established, under which without distinction all are invited to return to God. "All men, in consequence of *Christ's undertaking*, are under a dispensation of mercy, and are endured with much long suffering; they are not left desperate, have many temporal mercies, and shall *all arise to judgment*. There is also such an infinite sufficiency in the atonement of Christ, and it is so proposed to sinners as a common salvation for all who will accept of it, that a foundation is laid for the most unreserved invitations, exhortations, and expostulations, and no sin-

a Rom.. iii. 25, 26. 2 Cor. v. 18—21.

ner will be rejected, who sincerely desires this salvation." *a*

Many things are granted, indeed, to those who shall eventually perish for the sake of those who shall eventually be saved, but this is not the only reason why they are granted them. If it were, why is the gospel preached to mankind in common? and why are not multitudes treated as the fallen angels are?

Men, indeed, abuse this forbearance, and so treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, but this is entirely their own fault. The patience of God gives the sinner time and opportunity for repentance, and the discoveries of his mercy furnish him with motives and encouragements; and were it not for man's total depravity, the proposals of the gospel must prevail with every one to repent of his departure from God, and to return to his worship and service. *b*

It follows, then, that the objection grounded on the sentiment, that Christ did not appear to redeem from the effects of the first sin, and that therefore they *must* in all cases be *fully* endured, is altogether untenable. Though the sufferings which precede natural death, as well as death itself, proceed from the offence of Adam, yet those

a Scott on Rom. 15—19.

b Ibid. ii. 4—6.

sufferings are far from being the same in every individual, so that there is evidently a mixture of mercy and judgment in the present dispensation. There is, therefore, nothing in it which can in the least militate against the salvation of infants, from those effects of the sin of Adam which respect what follows dissolution. This view of the subject accounts in some measure for the mixed nature of the providence of Heaven in the present state. When the final judgment arrives, and the whole bearings of the present on the future are laid open, we shall adore the righteousness of the Judge, and the rich grace and mercy of the sovereign Benefactor.

The universal death of mankind, in consequence of a single offence, is a striking proof of the evil and demerit of sin, and of the exceeding opposition which exists between it and happiness. The death of Adam alone could afford no adequate display of the pernicious nature of rebellion against God, but the death of a whole race fearfully manifests its inherent malignity. The value of this lesson to infants in a future world, will infinitely overbalance the loss of this life, and justify the ways of Him who cannot be unjust.

The death of such is a striking proof to adults, of the Divine displeasure against sin, and of the abhorrence in which it is held by the God of purity. Every instance, indeed, of disease and mortality, is a proof of the faithfulness of God to his threat-

enings. We may learn from the uniform fulfilment of the threatening of death, which followed the promise of mercy, that he will execute with equal certainty his threatening of the second death, in all its fearful extent, on every impenitent sinner. It is very wrong to consider death merely as a debt due to nature, for it is the result of sin, and is the strongest visible expression of the Divine justice which is afforded us in the present world. It is the gospel alone which opens a door of hope, and a prospect of happiness beyond it. And how many have been led by the struggles of adversity, and the devastations of death, to listen to the ravishing sounds of that message which proclaims present deliverance from guilt and sin, and wretchedness, and final deliverance from death and the grave, and full satisfying and social happiness in the regions of immortality. Thus have the ills of life led them to "the rest and the refreshing wherewith he causeth the weary to be refreshed." Perhaps this is what the apostle means, when he speaks of some who had been baptized for the dead.^a That is, they had been led to study and to embrace the Gospel, from regard to the life and incorruption which it brings to light. Its blessed discoveries, in relation to eternity, were balm to their agitated and sorrowful minds, when oppressed at once with a sense of guilt, and the weight of the many sor-

^a 1 Cor. xv. 29.

rows and ills of life. This sense of the preposition here rendered *for*, is confirmed by Rom. ix. 27, 2 Cor. i. 7, 8, where it signifies concerning, and denotes the subject concerning which a person is speaking or writing, and by Mark ix. 40, Acts ix. 16, Rom. viii. 31. 32, where it signifies that connexion which is produced by affection or attachment. The words of eternal life form the object embraced ; for it is the discovery that Jesus alone has them, that attracts the heart to him. *a*

I shall here advert to an inconsistency which attaches to the sentiment of those who think that the death denounced against the first transgression of Adam was only natural death. If the actual sins of his posterity are to be punished with the second death, how can it consist with equity, that the first threatening of death, which in the case of the first man was certainly pointed against actual transgression, should have included only natural death ? It cannot for a moment be supposed, that his first sin had in it less criminality than the sins of his posterity. But in order to maintain consistency, it is necessary, not only to suppose this, but also to conclude that his first sin had in it less criminality than his subsequent transgressions ; for against them, as well as against those of his posterity, the threatening of the second death must have been pointed.

a John vi. 68.

To suppose that the death originally denounced against a sin committed by one circumstanced as Adam was, consisted in the mere extinction of his existence, whether immediately or after living for a time in toil and labour, while the death denounced as the wages of every transgression of his posterity is sensible, hopeless, never-ending misery,—the eternal death, not of being, but of well-being, seems at utter variance with every principle of consistency and equity. But on the principle that the death of the body was not followed by the extinction of being, but, on the contrary, left the soul in the hands of the living God, in the separate state, it is easy to see that there was full scope for the complete infliction of that which constitutes the essence of the curse, and for the endurance of all that is comprehended in that most solemn and awful expression, “the wrath of God.” The God of our spirits could easily subject him to as great a punishment apart from the body as in it, so that there is no room for the objection, that according to the preceding reasoning, the punishment of Adam had been less than that of his posterity in the embodied state. “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?”

To what extent his posterity, supposing the original constitution of things to have provided for their existence in a separate state, could, in the nature of things, have been capable of participating in the consequences of his sin, I do not stop to inquire. It is a mercy that this question is super-

seded, so far as experience is concerned, by the appearance of the Saviour. It is self-evident, however, that the spirit of Adam must have been fearfully susceptible of the most acute anguish, and the most agonizing mental torture. Who can express or even conceive the misery which a spirit in the hands of the almighty, holy, and living God, may be doomed to endure? In the case of Adam, supposing no Saviour had been provided, what agonies of remorse, and of grief, and of self-upbraiding reflections must have wrung his soul, when conscience depicted the nature, aggravations, and dismal effects of his crime; and when he thought of the height from which he had fallen, the blessedness which he had lost, and the consequences of his sin, as they respected not only himself, but the many for whom he stood, and the many that had fallen in his fall. Think of the shame, and the bitterly agonizing reflections and sensations, which must have stung his soul to the quick.

Now, in the very nature of things, no being who had not personally been guilty of what he had committed, and who had not been circumstanced as he individually was, could ever suffer as he, in such circumstances had suffered. The punishment of sin, as has already been stated, is not torture inflicted by mere power, for it naturally arises from the arrangements made by the Judge, in order that sin may produce its natural fruits and consequences. Now, these arrangements are or-

dered as seems best to the righteous and only wise God, whose wisdom will always be manifested in the appointment of the circumstances in which the penalty of his law is inflicted. The pangs of remorse, and the reflections of an accusing conscience, constitute the worm which shall never die; and the rage of keen and ungratified passions and lusts, may well be compared to unquenchable fire. Who can conceive the dismal consequences of the power which unbridled lusts and passions may acquire, through habits of sin? But in the case of departed infants, there has been no space for the habits of sin gaining such an advantage.

These considerations should ever be kept in view, when we speak of the death denounced against the first sin of Adam as the same with that in which his posterity are by nature involved. The import of the threatening, as it regarded them, could only be, that in as far as the relative consequences *could* in the nature of things come upon them, they should be involved in them. That departed infants could in every respect suffer as Adam would have done, is inconsistent with every principle of reason. It involves, as a writer on this subject has very properly hinted, the revolting idea, that the Almighty, by the exertion of physical ability, would so govern their consciousness, as to make them conceive that to be true which really was not, and so represents future punishment, not only as

an arbitrary infliction by mere power, but as in fact founded upon false impressions. ^a Far, infinitely far from us be such unhallowed notions as these !

This is a notion somewhat akin to the too common idea, that punishment will somehow follow sin, because it is the will of God that it should, and because he is able to inflict it; without any apprehension of the fearful truth that sin itself, and not merely the direct operation of Almighty power, is the cause of misery. A sentiment like this has the most direful effects in the world, because it blinds the mind to the true nature of sin, the scripture character of God, the nature of true religion, and the nature of heavenly enjoyment.

^a Dr. Harris, in his Essay on the Salvation of Infants, p. 27.

SECTION V.

IN order to the further illustration of the subject, it may be of importance to consider the nature of that dispensation under which mankind are now placed, as it bears on their condition at the final judgment.

A Chief Ruler exercises both justice in the character of a Lawgiver, and benevolence in that of a sovereign Benefactor, for these characters are in themselves distinct, though sustained by the same individual. In the former he judges according to law and equity, and in the latter he exercises the royal prerogative of pardoning offences and conferring favours.

Now, the dispensation under which mankind are placed, is not a system of mere benevolence, for while it manifests the exceeding riches of Divine grace, it provides for the maintenance of the authority, and the full display of the whole character of God, and also for the exercise of all the faculties of men in a manner adapted to their present condition, as accountable agents. It is therefore at once a system of moral government, and of sovereign goodness. Under the former view, it makes provision for the full illustration of the Di-

vine holiness, righteousness, and truth in the plan of redemption, and under the latter, it glorifies the Divine love, mercy, and grace ; the former by means of exhibitions and instructions, precepts and warnings, shows what are the obligations of men, and the latter by revelations from the God of all grace, exhibits the mercies and the blessings which flow from his gracious purposes and self-moved love. The one informs us how an interest in the salvation of Christ is to be had, and the other points us to the proper source of all that we need. In a word, while the message of mercy publishes peace, it is clothed with authority, and demands, as it well deserves, the most cordial reception. It follows, then, that when men are called to believe in Christ, and to walk under the influence of that truth which manifests the sovereign kindness of Heaven, they are addressed as accountable agents, because capable of rational and voluntary moral actions. They are the subjects of moral government, because, being possessed of the natural faculties of reason, they are capable of being ruled by rational motives, instead of being wholly guided by mere instinct or by mechanical impulse. Now, it is easy to see that infants cannot be accountable creatures, and to them therefore the present dispensation considered as a moral economy cannot apply. But God acts towards mankind, not merely as a moral Ruler, but as a sovereign Benefactor ; and from the nature of the dispensation of mercy,

it appears, that when any of the human race cannot while on earth be his subjects in the former character, they are made the objects of goodness in the latter, and are of course saved.

The ambiguity of the term *sovereignty*, has arisen from the loose way in which it has been used to signify supremacy. God is doubtless supreme, both as a Judge and a Sovereign, because, in whatever capacity he acts, there can be none above him, but sovereignty is a distinct attribute of God, and has its appropriate acts, which should not be confounded with those of other attributes. As a moral governor, God gives to his subjects what is due to them as accountable agents; he uses means with them suited to their rational nature; he issues equitable laws as the basis of all judicial administration; and he never punishes beyond desert, *a* but as a sovereign Benefactor he acts according to the good pleasure of his will in the communication of good only, and of good that is undeserved, for sovereignty is exercised only for the welfare of its object. *b* Now, in that dispensation which has been established through Christ, the two characters are strikingly blended, though their provinces are carefully preserved. The atonement which has been made by His blood, and the proclamation of mercy through it to the very chief of

a Rom. vii. 22, i. 32, and ii. 5.

b Rom. ii. 4. iii. 24. Eph. ii. 1—9.

sinner, have laid the foundation of a particular exercise of moral government, in consequence of the connexion between the law and the gospel, while they are the medium of the most exalted display of sovereign mercy and goodness. In connexion with the revelation of the plan of mercy, many favours were conferred upon the children of men. Even the evils which followed the entrance of sin, are so circumstanced as to be the means of profiting them. The goodness and long suffering of God ought to lead men to him, and would do so, were it not that they do not like to retain the knowledge of his character. It is this indisposition of mind towards Him which blinds their eyes to the degree of light which they enjoy.

It is worthy of particular attention, that every exercise of moral government on the part of God, pre-supposes some exercise of sovereign kindness for its basis. *a* Thus the dominion exercised by Him over our first parents, pre-supposed the favour of existence, and also the favour of those faculties and enjoyments which he so liberally granted them. Now, the exalted prerogative of sovereignty has been employed by God in making all things harmoniously to co-operate to the praise of the glory of his grace, in connexion with the

a Heb. xi. 6.

whole of his perfections. *a* In the gospel we see a salvation completely adapted to the circumstances and wants of sinners, an atonement of infinite value, as the basis of a universal proclamation of pardon and reconciliation to all who submit to mercy, and many calls and invitations addressed to the guilty of every class and character, entreating them to come and to partake freely of its precious blessings. The message of God to them is suited to their faculties as moral and accountable agents, and it accordingly addresses them as such, and appeals to their understanding and conscience, while it exhibits matter of infinite interest to engage the affections, and influence the will. There is, therefore, in these objective or moral means of salvation, the best foundation for that particular exercise of authority, which obtains under the economy of mercy; and accordingly the gospel of peace is accompanied with a commandment to receive it, disobedience to which is followed by judicial condemnation.

It deserves particular notice, that under the dispensation of grace which followed the fall, the law and the gospel have always been revealed together. One great error of the Jews was, the separation of the law from the promise of the Saviour. The law and the gospel are doubtless in themselves dis-

a Eph. i. 3—11.

tinct, but they are revealed together,—they throw much light on each other, and the reception of the latter is enjoined by the former. On the entrance of sin, mankind fell into a state of condemnation. Now, though this condition did not in the least interfere with their obligations to serve God, yet he did not teach fallen man to look on Him merely as a lawgiver. The commandments which he gave to his fallen creature, were all connected with the promise of a Saviour who should bruise the head of the serpent, and it was the belief of this promise which alone could inspire him with proper principles of obedience. Every subsequent revelation, and every commandment given to man, was connected with this. Partial as was the early light communicated to mankind, they were taught the delightful truth, that God could be at once just and merciful, and that at last salvation would be effected in a manner honourable to his character and government. The precepts, promises, and declarations which from time to time were delivered by the voice of inspiration, united the law of Heaven with the gospel of peace, and served the double purpose of exciting a conviction of guilt, and maintaining the hope of forgiveness, while in proportion as the saving truth was believed, the heart was turned unto God. The light which was thus imparted, was carried down by tradition. The typical institutions of altars, sacrifices, and priests, and the various material emblems of sacred things

which were established, served to illustrate the leading doctrines of the grace of God, and to impress them upon the mind. The separation of the people of Israel was in subserviency to the gracious design of God towards the world at large. Accordingly, traces both of the law of God and of those institutions which illustrated the gospel, are to be found through the world, which shows how the original revelation, and also that given to Israel have been disseminated, though in their progress greatly corrupted. I need not stop to say, that in the New Testament scriptures, the most close connexion is preserved between the law and the gospel. The former shows us the will of God and our duty,—the latter cures us of our indisposition to obedience, and restores us to that holy love which makes us esteem it a privilege, and furnishes us with all that can render it the very element of our bliss. It deserves to be considered, in connexion with this, that the present dispensation is accompanied with the bestowment of many benefits on all, and with the exercise of much patience and forbearance, by which a foundation is laid for that administration under which all of mankind who have come to be accountable agents, shall be finally judged, according to their personal deeds.

Since this system of government, then, has a display of sovereign kindness, and particularly of abundant grace towards sinners for its basis, it follows, that no person will, on the present plan, be

condemned for mere breach of law, unconnected with forbearing mercy, and without having abused more or less of the Divine goodness; and hence the awful solemnity of a future judgment. Whosoever are finally saved, will have the fullest reason to say that they are saved by grace, and those who perish will do so, entirely because of their abuse of the measure of truth which was known by them, or which they might have known, had they sought after it.

If this twofold design of the gospel dispensation be properly considered, it will appear, that none are excluded from the blessings conferred by God as a Sovereign Benefactor; but those who in the disobedience of their hearts, continue to trifle with or reject the goodness displayed by Him in that gracious character. By this, they at once disregard his authority on the one hand, and abuse his kindness on the other. Now, as deceased infants can be guilty of neither, since they were never in the present world the subjects of his moral government, they cannot on this ground be excluded; and as they are capable, notwithstanding of their infantile state, of being the objects of sovereign compassion and goodness, it follows, according to the plan adopted by God, that they are called to the enjoyment of his gracious blessing.

The principle on which this new dispensation is regulated, leads then, to the conclusion, that the blessings of mercy are imparted wherever the in-

terests of the Divine honour and government do not demand condemnation, such as in cases of final impenitence and unbelief. A declaration that all men shall infallibly be saved, though they continue in sin, or irrespective of a reception of the truth, would amount “to a bill of indemnity to all sinners—a licence to transgress under an assurance of impunity,” while the honour of the holy and righteous character of God, would be sacrificed. But the universal salvation of deceased infants, can have no such effect. It seems inconceivable, how, after the atonement of Christ, the honour of any of the Divine perfections, or the good of the universe, should require the final condemnation of any who have not been guilty of actual transgression. Since, therefore, none of the reasons which now limit the enjoyment of salvation, can have place in infants, it follows, according to the genius of the gospel, that all of them who die in infancy are saved.

There is no room for supposing, that as they were never subjects of that system of moral government which is established through Christ, so neither may they enjoy the blessings which, under his administration, are the gift of sovereignty, but may be left to the natural effects of the breach of the first constitution established with Adam: This supposition is completely precluded by the fact, that they shall certainly be raised from the dead, through Christ; for this connects them with the economy introduced by Him, and as they obtain

this boon, they must of course, as things now stand, obtain the blessings of his grace, for the cause of condemnation now is the rejection of the truth, and of this evil they have in no respect been guilty.

In reference to the present dispensation, Dr. Owen has expressed himself to the following effect:—
 “To what end, says he, shall we conceive the providence and patience of God, to be exercised towards mankind, for so long a time on the earth?” and in replying to this, he shows it to be unsuitable to the wisdom and goodness of God, to suppose that he hath no other end in his patience but merely to suffer mankind to sin, that so he may at length eternally destroy them. He allows that multitudes of them eventually perish, but this he ascribes to their own perverse wickedness, blindness, and love of the pleasures of sin. *a* These sentiments are in accordance with scripture, and warrant us to ask, ‘If this be true in regard to adults, can it consist with the present dispensation of mercy, to suppose that the Almighty calls into existence multitudes of infants, merely to support them for a little on earth, that he may afterwards make them miserable for ever?’ It could not be said of them, that they had perished through their own personal wickedness, as is the case with impenitent actual transgressors, and

a Owen, on the Hebrews, 2 Edition, Vol. 1, page 155, 156.

to affirm that any thing else is in any case the ground of condemnation, is to fly in the face of the most explicit declarations of scripture. *a*

The spirit of the gospel of peace is in unison with the doctrine of the universal salvation of departed infants. It is called glad tidings of great joy to all people. There are no exceptions in the proclamation of mercy, so that none are excluded from its blessings who do not exclude themselves. It testifies to the perfection and all-sufficiency of the atonement of Christ—it declares that through this honourable medium, God appears just while he justifies the ungodly; and it uses the most affectionate entreaties, and the most unfettered invitations in calling upon all to embrace the blessings it exhibits. *b*

No holy pre-requisites or qualifications are required in order to warrant an approach to the Saviour. *c* The Holy Spirit, to whom every possible variety and aggravation of crime is at all times present, declares, in the most solemn manner, that whosoever believeth in Jesus shall assuredly be saved, *d* and the commandment of Christ is, that the Gospel be preached to every creature. *e*

a Prov. i. 23, 25. 2 Thess. i. 8. ii. 10, 11, 12 *b* Rom.

iii. 25, 26, and iv. 5. Isaiah lv. 1—3. *c* Isaiah

xlvi 12. Matt. xi. 28. *d* Acts x. 43.

e Mark xvi. 15.

Now, it is not meant to be argued here, that because the greatest of sinners may be saved, and have been so, therefore inferior transgressors must be so, and of course, infants who have not been actual offenders at all. Since forgiveness, and the gift of eternal life, are the fruits of free mercy and undeserved grace, it might have pleased God to grant these favours to the worst of characters, and to withhold them from those who were less guilty. On the ground just mentioned, therefore, we do not plead for the salvation even of infants. The ground of our reasoning is, that since pardon and eternal life are proclaimed to the very chief of sinners, *not* merely for their sakes, but for the express purpose of showing to every one, that there are no exceptions in the gospel message,—since the very worst are saved for the particular purpose of being “a pattern of all long suffering,” *a* to encourage every one to come to the Saviour, in the confidence of obtaining mercy; and since the design of God is to show thereby, that if any perish, it is because they will not come to Him for life; *b* it follows, from the spirit of such a dispensation, that none will be excluded who could not resist or disregard *any* of those truths, on which it is established, or with which it is connected, in any form or circumstances, in which they have ever

a 1 Tim. i. 15. 16.

b John v. 40.

been exhibited. The salvation of infants, therefore, shows a striking consistency between the gracious aspect of the gospel, and the actual communications of the grace of God.

I am here led to consider, the scripture representation of the last judgment, in so far as it bears on the present subject. It is doubtless true, that God might have left mankind to suffer the natural consequences of the entrance of sin, but this he has not done. He has, on the contrary, of his unmerited mercy established a dispensation of grace, in consequence of which, he stands in a new relation to them; and their final state will be determined according to their character in this new situation; that is, their ultimate condition will be fixed according to the reception which they give to the truth. They shall be judged according to the kind and degree of their works. The nature or kind of their works, will be a test of character, inasmuch as it will show whether they have embraced or rejected the truth, and the degree of their obedience, or the number and qualities of their acceptable services, will show the degree of the holy character which shall thus be disclosed in the case of believers; and, on the other hand, the extent of disobedience will make manifest the measure of the guilt of the impenitent and unbelieving. The former will regulate the degrees of glory to be granted on the one hand, and the latter will determine the measure of punish-

ment to be inflicted, on the other. Thus, though by works shall none be justified; yet, according to their works, all shall be judged. The condemnation of the wicked, will be felt to be in justice inflicted, and the blessings of eternal life, it will be seen, are graciously bestowed.

Now, to adults is granted a measure of light, and none of them perish, except in consequence of their neglect or abuse of it; but infants have not this advantage, and therefore if they perish, they are placed in much worse circumstances, notwithstanding of their being free from actual transgression. It may be said, that the whole is of grace, and therefore this may be accounted for by the mere good pleasure of God. But the question at present, is not what God might in equity have done, but what he has said he will do, in consequence of the introduction of the gospel economy. By it, men are placed under a dispensation of mercy, and are to be judged according to their works in relation to it; and therefore, as infants cannot reject the salvation of God, nor indeed act in opposition to the light at all, it follows, on every fair principle of reasoning, that the covenant of mercy embraces them all. Neither is the question ‘Why does God do more for some adults than for others of them, whether in regard to external advantages, or special grace, but what light has he thrown on his purposes regarding infants?’

Now, the language used in relation to judgment, has a striking bearing on this subject.

Accordingly, when the scriptures introduce the subject of final retribution, they warn sinners of its certain approach, as an alarming consideration, in consequence of their personal guilt; they describe the character of those who shall be doomed to misery, as marked by the abuse of the Divine goodness and long suffering; *a* by the practice of iniquity; *b* by the neglect of Christ and his salvation; *c* by wilful unbelief and impenitence; *d* by a formal and hypocritical profession of religion, *e* and in general by their personal transgressions. *f* Even those who are said to perish without law, are described as having personally sinned against the light which they had, and as without excuse. *g* But in no instance do they advert to it, as big with any thing painful to that immense portion of the human race, who were never capable of actual rebellion. John indeed says, that he saw small and great at the tribunal of judgment, but he does not refer to corporeal stature, but to rank and situation in social life, for he says, they were judged “according to their *works*.” *h*

a Rom. ii. 3—5. *b* Matt. xiii. 40—43. *c* Heb. ii. 3.

d John iii. 18, 36, and xii. 48. Matt. x. 14. 15.

e Matt. xxiv. 51. *f* Rev. xxi. 8, 27. and xxii. 11.

g Rom. i. 18,—21. and ii. 12,—16.

h Rev. xx. 12, compared with chap. xi. 18.

No doubt those who died in infancy will be there, for all of them are to be raised from the dead, but they will be there, only to be called to bliss, and to be profited by the instructive and impressive scenes of that day, and not to be judged according to their works, for of these they have none, on account of which, they can be either condemned or applauded.

John, in allusion to human proceedings, in cases of judgment, tells us, that he saw "the books were opened, and that the dead were judged out of those things, which were written in the books according to their *works*." He says, moreover, that another book was opened, which is the book of life. The books which had been previously mentioned, are the records of the deeds of men, and of the revelation of the will of God, as far as it was made known to them respectively; and the book of life, as distinguished from these others, is the register of all the genuine members of the church of Christ. Now, our Lord when speaking of infants, says, "of such is the kingdom of heaven;" meaning by this, as we shall afterwards endeavour to prove, that the kingdom of God is in a great measure composed of such, and therefore their names must be in the book of life, that is, in the register "of the living in Jerusalem." To keep up the allusion introduced here, none who, from their works as recorded in the other books, were found to have rejected the truth, would be found in the book of life.

But in those books there could be nothing recorded concerning the deeds of infants, for they have personally done neither good nor evil, and to them therefore what is said of those books cannot apply. But though their names cannot appear in *them*, because they never were moral agents on earth, they will yet be found in the book of life, for “of such is the kingdom of God.” This book is accordingly distinguished very particularly from the other books, according to the contents of which, none but those who have been moral agents can be judged.

If it be said, ‘Why suppose that deceased infants shall have nothing more to do at the Judgment Seat, than to be declared absolved from all the effects of the sin of Adam, and as made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, to be called to enjoy it?’—it may be replied, ‘Why suppose, on the other hand, that they shall have nothing more to do there than to be condemned for *his* sin?’ In the latter case as well as in the former, they could not be the subjects of a *scrutiny* in the judgment. No book of death is mentioned, in distinction from the records of the deeds of the wicked, and of the law of God, as it bears upon them. No intimation is given, that any shall be there, simply in order to be condemned without any personal deeds, to form the subject of investigation, and the ground of the sentence to be pronounced: It is generally granted, however, that some infants shall be saved, and of course *some*, it

is allowed, will be there simply to be declared absolved from the consequences of the sin of Adam, and to be called to the celestial paradise. Since, then, it is granted that in certain cases this shall take place, there can nothing be urged against the thing itself, while the fact, that not the most distant hint is given, that the opposite shall take place, proves that it will hold universally in regard to infants.

Referring to this subject, the apostle, when reasoning on the perfection and all-sufficiency of the atonement of Christ, as it bears on the sins both of those who lived before his appearance in the flesh, and those who have or shall yet come into the world since, expresses himself thus: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him he shall appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.^a Now, the death spoken of is not the second death, for it is a dying but once, and it is a death which takes place before the judgment, whereas the second death follows the judgment ^b. It is the death to which men are appointed on account of the one offence of Adam, their common representative. After this death, the general judgment is ordained to take place, in which, as we have

^a Heb. ix. 27, 28.

^b Rev. xx. 14. and xxi. 8.

seen, men shall be judged according to their own deeds done in the body, and by which they shall be fixed in an unalterable state, without any further revolutions of life and death.

When speaking of the judgment, the apostle must have had his eye on the resurrection which is to precede it, as in speaking of death he refers to its origin—the sin of Adam. Now, as infants are to be delivered from the latter, by the former, and cannot be doomed to the second death, what follows, but that in the day of Christ, they shall be called by him into his heavenly glory?

The punishment denounced against the personal offences of men, and which is denominated the second death, is not a second death of the body, for it takes place in the embodied state, which shall follow the resurrection from the first death. It is the punishment of both body and soul in the pit of perdition.^a It is not only not an extinction of being,—it is not even a second change in the *mode* of being,—it is the destruction of well-being, both as it regards the body and the spirit. It follows, therefore, as the apostle reasons, that as men are not appointed in consequence of their personal offences, to die a second bodily death like unto the first, so Christ did not need to die more than once,

^a Matt. x. 28.

although he suffered for the sins of many. When mention is made of sins in the plural, and of the sins of *many*, the reference must be to personal offences, and to the punishment denounced against them, and not merely to the one offence of the first man, and to what has followed it. From both the first and the second death, do personal offenders need to be delivered, and deliverance from both is secured by the atonement of Christ. To them that look for him, he will appear the second time to complete their salvation, by delivering them from the whole effects of the curse, and calling them, as sons of the resurrection, to the heavenly glory. He will come without sin offering, that is, not to offer sacrifice for sin, as he did when he first appeared: And why not, but because, by the offering up of himself once for all, he hath fully expiated guilt. There is nothing here, of that unmoved indifference with which some can speak of the final perdition of men, and even of their infant connexions; a state of mind very unlike to that of the Saviour, who, when he beheld the city, wept over it. Even in regard to those, of whose condemnation we may have a moral certainty, it were unjustifiable to feel or speak as numbers have done, in relation to infants. Paul felt the deepest sorrow for his kinsmen, when he thought of their condition; and can any regard it as a mark of soundness in the faith, to indulge in a spirit which be-

trays a very different state of feeling. In the day of Christ his people will perfectly acquiesce in all that is done, but in the present state, we are not called to feel in regard to the condemned as we shall do then. Besides, our feeling even then will not be that of a frigid or a proud indifference. The apostle delighted to dwell on the thought, that the blood of Jesus was “shed for the remission of the sins of many.” A high tone of triumph filled his soul, as he fixed his eye on this illustrious display of the peerless grandeur and infinite worth of His precious sacrifice. He saw in it, not merely the pledge that the direct effects of the transgression of Adam shall be done away, but the pledge also, that no weight of guilt shall ever exclude from the Divine mercy, where this atonement is rested on, as the only ground of acceptance with God. He saw, in the salvation of many actual transgressors, a greater display of the Divine glory, than in the salvation of infants from the effects of the first offence; and can we wonder, then, that he should generally take the latter for granted, while expatiating on the former.

It is not meant by this to affirm, that because multitudes of actual offenders are saved, therefore God is bound in equity to save and glorify infants, for their redemption and bliss must be traced to his rich mercy and grace, but that such is the nature of the present dispensation, that wherever, as

in the case of infants, there has been no opposition to the light of Heaven, there the blessings of mercy will descend. No one will have it to say, that he is doomed to irretrievable misery, merely because of the offence of Adam.

The bearings of this subject on the hearers of the gospel, are of the greatest moment. What will it avail any such, to plead against the wisdom or the equity of the constitution established with Adam? Have they not often approved of his sin and imitated his ways? Yes, they have abetted his rebellion, and they have involved themselves in deeper condemnation than that which followed his sin. Does not the gospel proclaim to all who believe, deliverance from the second death? And what hinders any from receiving it, but the love of sin, the love of this world, and an unwillingness to come to Christ, that they may have life? Every suitable motive, and every encouragement which can operate on their faculties and circumstances, the message of Heaven addresses to them, in order to awaken them to a sense of their interest, and to persuade them to escape from the wrath which is to come. Oh! that all who enjoy the light of the gospel would consider their ways, and welcome Him who from the cross beseeches them, in accents the most engaging, to abandon their vain pursuits, and to come to Him for rest to their souls. "This is the rest, and this is the refreshing wherewith he caus-

eth the weary to be refreshed." How fearful the thought, that to words like these, God should have to add, "Yet they would not hear." *a*

If a proclamation of pardon were made to the inhabitants of a rebellious province in common, on their submitting to the mercy of their prince, certainly those of them who refused to lay down their arms, would, when brought to punishment, suffer, not merely because of their rebellion, but because they had rejected the pardon of their king. Not that the refusal of mercy is the only crime for which such would be punished, for their rebellion is certainly that for which they suffer, but that the refusal of mercy is the occasional cause of their punishment, since, if they had submitted to their prince, they had been forgiven. Besides, the rejection of the pardon was itself an act of rebellion, and an act that sealed all which had gone before, and must therefore have added a fearful aggravation to their misery. In like manner, though sinners have exposed themselves to the curse of the law, by their breaches of its precepts, yet their final misery, because of this, is occasioned by their rejection of the gospel.

Now, if in such a rebellious province, there had been a number of orphan children, who were in-

a Isaiah xxviii. 12.

volved in the legal forfeiture of certain privileges, would not the spirit of the general proclamation of mercy, include their deliverance from the relative loss to which they were exposed, though they could not express any kind of submission, which was called for in adults, since neither could they be guilty of active rebellion.—And is not the spirit of the gospel message of a similar kind?

SECTION VI.

WITH a view to the further illustration of the subject, it may be proper again to advert to some parts of the reasoning of the apostle, in Rom. v. 12—19.

The object of the apostle is, to illustrate the public character of Christ by that of Adam—to illustrate the way of salvation, by the way in which mankind are involved in guilt, and to show that the blessings of redemption come upon mankind, without regard to the distinction between Jews and Gentiles.

He begins by saying, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Verse 12. This verse is closed as if it made a complete sentence, but the structure of the language cannot admit of its being considered as such; for it is evidently but a part of a sentence, in one side of a comparison. If we look forward to the 18th verse, we will find both sides of the comparison; but though we should consider the intermediate verses as a parenthesis, yet the 18th does not well connect itself with the 12th, so as to finish the sentence. It appears, then, that what is

called the reddition, or the other side of the comparison, is to be sought, not in what follows, but in what goes before. There is there given a most glowing description of the sublime glory of the plan of redemption, and of the exalted privileges of the people of God; and with his eye upon the whole, the apostle in effect says, "Wherefore this abundance of grace is bestowed, through Christ, in a way corresponding with that in which sin and death entered into the world, through the first man, and have passed through him unto all generations of mankind." As life and salvation are the fruits of the mediation of Christ, as a public Head, so death is the result of the offence of Adam, as a public character. The latter is confirmed by the undeniable fact, that multitudes of the human race are cut off in infancy, before they are capable of actual transgression. No man, accordingly, is put upon his trial, whether he can obtain exemption from the general condemnation of Adam and his seed.

This death is often called temporal death, and according to the intention of God, it was so, but not in virtue of any restriction in the original threatening, for that afforded no hope of a restoration to life. It has obtained this appellation, in distinction from that death which is spiritual, or that which consists in the loss of the image and favour of God; but perhaps it would be better to express this distinction, by calling it natural death; since

the reason why it is not eternal in duration, is the redemption obtained by Christ.

The apostle does not directly introduce that state of the soul, which would have followed the death of the body, in the event of the full execution of the original threatening, but selects, in proof of his position, that part of the curse which is visible, and the universal infliction of which cannot be questioned.

But though the descendants of Adam come into the world in a state of utter destitution of those spiritual principles, which he lost by the fall, and may therefore be said to be spiritually dead, yet the apostle makes a very explicit distinction between relative and personal blame, when he says of departed infants, that they had "not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." This distinction is not made for the purpose of showing that such have a *right* to salvation, but in order to show the origin of sin and of death—to show the analogy that there is between the way in which mankind come to be treated as sinners, and that in which they come to be treated as righteous;—and also to show, from the spirit of the gospel dispensation, that where, as in the case of infants the Divine mercy and goodness have not been opposed or neglected, there the blessings of his grace will be imparted.

In confirmation of these statements, let it be considered, that the apostle is writing to Christians of

long standing, and who were generally very well informed, for their "faith was spoken of throughout the whole world." They of course must have known, that there is to be a general resurrection, and therefore a reversal, through Christ, of the sentence of death, which was passed on the posterity of Adam, in consequence of his sin;—that mankind are consequently placed under a new and merciful dispensation, according to the provisions of which their final condition is to be determined—and that this dispensation, as we have already seen, bears a gracious aspect towards infants. It is easy to see, then, why the apostle, instead of stopping to establish these things by a train of discussion, rather takes them for granted, and employs them as the means of illustrating to those who already knew them, the analogy between the constitution established with Adam, and that established with Christ. His reasoning serves the double purpose of furnishing a striking illustration of the plan of redemption, and of refuting the false notions of the Jews, that they had no head but Abraham,—that as his descendants, they were in a state of safety, and that all others were under the curse. The former, however, is the principal object, and the latter is introduced chiefly for the sake of it.

He had enumerated, in the beginning of the chapter, the exalted privileges of the children of God, and had represented them as the na-

tural result of the glorious work, and the prevalent mediation of Christ, in which the love of God was displayed, and through which it flows toward sinners : And for the sake of illustrating these subjects more clearly, he institutes, in the latter part of the chapter, a comparison between the nature and effects of the constitution established with the first Adam, and those of the constitution established with the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. It is worthy of particular notice, that in this comparison the evils which have followed the breach of the former, and the blessings which result from the confirmation of the latter, are stated in very general terms only, and that the great thing insisted on is, the resemblance between the way in which we are subjected to the one, and that in which we come to partake of the other. 'This is just what was to be expected of the apostle, in addressing characters like the Christian Romans, who were acquainted with both, and who only required to have their views enlarged and their faith confirmed, by having the subjects placed in some new connexions, exhibited in their full harmony, and presented in a more vivid light by some apt illustrations. The careful consideration of these circumstances will account for the particular manner of the apostle's reasoning on the subjects in question.

When the apostle says, in verse 12th, that by one man sin entered into the world, he does not

mean to affirm merely, that Adam was the first sinner in the world, for “the woman being deceived, was first in the transgression:” He means, therefore, that the sin of Adam was the introduction to that state of guilt which obtains universally in the world. “The sin which is charged on all, and in consequence of which death is said to have passed on all, can be no other than that first sin of Adam, by which sin entered.” Accordingly, all are said to have sinned; and as the all in question must be all who have or shall yet come into existence, it follows, that by their having sinned, we are to understand their being treated as having done so in their head. “It cannot be understood of any sinning which has followed the passing of death, (particularly spiritual death) upon all men; it can only be understood of that sinning which preceded and primarily introduced this passing of death upon them all, and therefore it can only mean the first sinning of the one man, all men being considered as having then sinned in him.” We are accordingly told, in verse 13, that before the law of Moses was delivered, sin was in the world, that is, “it was lying in its guilt upon the world,” inasmuch as in consequence of it all mankind were treated as liable to the forfeiture incurred by it. *a*

The subject of which the apostle here treats,

a Sacred Contemplations, by Adam Gib, page 89, 90, 92.

then, is the way in which men come to be treated as sinners, through their connexion with Adam, as illustrative of the way in which they come to be treated as righteous through Christ. It follows, that when he speaks of the damage sustained by the sin of the former, he refers particularly to the legal, or directly penal effects of it, rather than to its natural or moral consequences ; and that when he opposes to this damage the benefit which comes by Christ, he particularly refers to that legal change of condition which flows from it. He accordingly distinguishes between death and sin, as the effect is distinguished from its cause, or the crime from its punishment. The reasoning of the apostle supposes, indeed, that in the first sin Adam fell into a state of corruption, and that sin has infected the whole of his posterity ; and in an after part of the epistle, he shows most distinctly the sanctifying influence of the grace of Christ upon his people ; but as he connects the one with the condemnation of man, so he connects the other with justification through Christ, the doctrine concerning which is the moral means of effecting a change of character.

In the 13th and 14th verses, he shows that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, because their condemnation arises from one common source, and he proceeds on the principle of representation as the basis of his argument, in regard to a common atonement. He says, however, in verse 15th, that while there is a correspondence between the

result of the fall of Adam, and that of the work of Christ, there is also a dissimilarity. "But not as the offence," says he, "so also is the free gift." The offence, properly speaking, is the first transgression, which is frequently opposed to the obedience of Christ: But here it is opposed to the free gift, or the benefit which comes by that work, and not directly to the work itself. It must therefore be here used to denote, not simply the offence itself, but the damage incurred by it. The reasoning then appears to be, that the benefit conferred through the work of Christ is not merely equal to the damage sustained by the offence of Adam, but far surpasses it. "For, if through the offence of one the many have died, much more reason have we to conclude that the free favour of God, and the gift conferred for the sake of such an one as Jesus his anointed Son, hath exceeded or superabounded unto the many."

The superabounding of the blessings of redemption over the effects of the general forfeiture incurred by the offence of Adam, is mentioned here in general only, but its nature is explained in the next two verses. In verse 16th, we are told, that though the general forfeiture arose from but one offence, yet we have much more reason to conclude that other, even many particular forfeitures incurred by personal offences are removed by the free gift as well as the first, so that the atonement superabounds over the effects of the sin of Adam. In

verse 17th, we are told, that if by one man's offence death reigned through him, there is much more reason to expect that all who receive the abundance of favour and the gift of life, shall not only enjoy life, but shall *reign* in life by one Jesus Christ. That is, the blessedness which follows the work of the Saviour, is not barely a resurrection from the death which hath followed the offence of Adam, though the argument implies that this will be granted to all, but includes also the highest glory and bliss in the celestial kingdom, in fellowship with Him who is there a priest upon his throne. Now, in as far as this blessedness exceeds the enjoyments of the earthly paradise, it exceeds the damage sustained by the fall.

When the apostle, after stating the damage, says, that *much more* will the surpassing benefit exhibited in the gospel be bestowed through Christ, his reasoning supposes that God "delighteth in mercy"—is "slow to anger," and reluctant to execute judgment; and that justice, in inflicting punishment, is limited to desert, while grace, when not obstructed by the claims of offended righteousness, can be imparted according to the good pleasure of his will. These views are connected with direct references to the transcendent dignity of the Saviour, and the infinite grandeur of his work. What had the obedience of Adam been, supposing him not to have fallen, when compared with that in which Jehovah rests with ineffable complacency!

The conclusion of the apostle, that we have the highest possible reason to expect that the benefit will infinitely exceed the damage, is therefore perfectly just.

The whole is summed up in the 18th and 19th verses, where the following deduction is stated: That "as by the first offence the sentence of death came upon all, whether Jews or Gentiles, so the redemption effected by Christ, brings to all justification of life, that is, deliverance from the general forfeiture, and also from every ground of condemnation arising from personal offences; the former being granted to all who are exposed to nothing but the original curse, and the latter to all actual transgressors who receive the truth. For, as through the disobedience of one, 'the many,' whether Jews or Gentiles, are treated as sinners, so through the obedience of one, the many, whether Gentiles or Jews, come on one common footing to be treated as righteous."

Now, the antithetical reasoning of the apostle, in regard to the damage on the one hand, and the benefit on the other, is not intended to teach that the penal effects of the sin of Adam, and the blissful results of the work of Christ, are in all respects co-extensive as to the number of their subjects, for it is clear, from scripture, that all are not saved; and besides, this were not an excess, but an equality. Still less can it be meant to teach, that the latter are in this sense more extensive than the for-

mer, for he is speaking of mankind alone. The superabundance of the benefit, then, must be sought in the nature and degree of the blessings to be conferred on the actual subjects of final salvation. But yet the argument seems evidently to suppose, that in some sense the benefit and the damage are co-extensive, in regard to their subjects; and the particular care which is taken to employ the same terms on both sides of the comparison, serves to confirm this.

The language in question is employed, indeed, to refute the false notions of the Jews, but it is with the further view of illustrating the plan of redemption. It implies, that there is a point in regard to which, the effects of the two constitutions correspond as to the number of their subjects, and that the excess of which the apostle speaks, consists in what goes beyond this in the actual experience of those who shall ultimately be saved, whatever be their *number*; the general language employed, in relation to the subjects of which arises from the full provision that is made for the free bestowment of it on all who believe.

Now, from the view which has already been given of the original curse—of the connexion between the economy of Christ and the general resurrection, and of the bearings of both these on the salvation of infants, it appears, that the two constitutions are thus far co-extensive, that the direct penal effects of the sin of Adam, separately

considered, are so far removed, that none shall be finally condemned, merely for his one 'offence,' or without having personally transgressed and actually concurred in that sin, by their approval and imitation of it. It follows, then, that those penal effects, are removed in regard to all who die without actual transgression. It is on this principle, that in the reasoning of the apostle, personal offences are represented as involving a forfeiture, and that the final condition of adults is represented as resulting from their personal character, because all such shall be judged according to the deeds done in the body.

It may here be remarked, that the concern of infants in the sin of Adam, is of a relative nature, and therefore the blame cannot be divided among them, so as that one may have this share of it, and another that, as is the case when a number have actively shared in the doing of a thing, for the whole of relative blame must attach equally to every individual of the parties concerned in it. Now, it must be granted, that the guilt of this sin was expiated by Christ, for otherwise Adam could never have been saved, and not a *single* infant could have been redeemed from its effects on his posterity. It follows, then, that even taking the strictest view of the atonement as an exact equivalent, the guilt of this sin must be removed, as to all of those who have not lived to make it their own, by their personal concurrence in it, by approval or imita-

tion. On this principle, then, the deliverance of all such, from the original curse, necessarily follows. To deny this, is to introduce a most strange minutely calculating process, which, admitting that the principle which leads to this in the present case, might be applied to the actual transgressions of men, without leading to a process altogether similar, can never be applied to the relative blame, which equally attaches to all, in reference to one sin. Such a view of the subject is quite revolting, because utterly at variance with the Divine grandeur of the work of redemption, and calculated to darken the subject by perplexing distinctions.

If, on the other hand, the atonement of Christ be viewed as a "general remedy, admitting according to the Divine pleasure and purpose of a particular application," *a* can it for a moment be supposed, that the immense multitudes of the human race who are removed by death, while incapable of actual sin, shall be excluded from this gracious provision, under a dispensation, which, as has already been stated, proceeds upon the principle, that no exclusion takes place, where the interests of the Divine government do not require it. It cannot *now* be necessary, for the manifestation of the righteousness of God, and the general good of

a Wardlaw on the Socinian Controversy, Discourse, vii.
William's Modern Calvinism, Chap. iii. § i.

the universe, that any infants be doomed to final condemnation; and therefore, on the principle just mentioned, we are warranted to conclude, that all of them who die in infancy are saved of his abundant goodness, through the work of Christ.

Now, when we consider the view thus given of a certain point, wherein the two constitutions correspond, namely, in the infliction of the penal effects of the sin of Adam, on the one hand, and in their removal on the other, so as that none are condemned for that sin, who have not made it their own, by personal concurrence, we see a foundation for the antithetical reasoning of the apostle, concerning "the many," while a foundation is also laid for that glorious superabundance of grace, which is provided for the remission of sins to all who receive the truth, and for the bestowment of that celestial glory, which shall actually be enjoyed by all who are finally saved. Accordingly, the reasoning employed concerning this superabundance, as displayed in the forgiveness of the many personal offences of all who embrace the truth, and in their elevation to the surpassing glory of the celestial kingdom, proceeds upon the principle, that all who die without personal offences are freed from the general forfeiture, and shall participate in the heavenly glory. In arguing for the greater, the apostle takes for granted the less; "He may be considered as teaching us, that the provisions of Divine grace completely shield from

the penal consequences of Adam's transgression, separately considered; because he affirms that they extend not to this only, but much *further*."

There is nothing, however, in his reasoning, which can lead to the conclusion, that all men must be saved. It could never be intended that the death of Christ should procure for sinners the blessings of celestial glory, even though they continue in rebellion, and in opposition to the truth, for this were subversive of the moral government of God, inconsistent with the means by which it is exercised, as well as at variance with the nature of salvation itself, and therefore tantamount to a licence to sin without fear.

It is enough for the apostle's argument, that through Christ, deliverance is obtained from the penal effects of the sin of Adam, separately considered; so that none shall finally be condemned, merely because of their connexion with him, and that provision is made in the plan of redemption, for the complete salvation of all who embrace the truth. *a*

"This appears to have been the reason of Adam's calling his wife by the new and significant name, Eve, (or Life) in consequence of the promise which had just before been opened to them, 'That the seed of the woman should bruise

a Bellamy's True Religion Delineated; Discourse ii. § vi.

the head of the serpent;^a and not merely because she was to be the mother of an extended progeny. A regard to the latter sense only, might more reasonably have filled him with painful solicitude.—But when, from this gracious discovery of the Divine Mediator, who should arise from among the seed of the woman, he was enabled to see and believe, that the sentence which his guilt had incurred, was so far reversed, that none of his posterity should finally perish on that account, and that a safe and honourable way of reconciliation was already established, and would be successively opened to his posterity, from which none would be excluded, who did not wilfully reject it, well might he with adoring thankfulness give such a new name to his wife, in the hope of Him who should be eminently and exclusively her seed.”^b

It would appear, that when, in verse 17, the apostle speaks of receiving the abundance of grace, the same thing is meant as when it is said of our Lord, in John i. 12, that to as many as received him, to them he gave the privilege of a place, as sons in the family of God. Now, when he says, that every actual transgressor who embraces the truth shall certainly be saved, does not his reason-

^a Gen. iii. 20.

^b Bennet's Treatise on the Gospel Constitution, p. 143.

ing proceed on the principle, that such as have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, and are incapable from their age, and circumstances of rejecting the grace of the Saviour, shall also finally be saved by it. This is confirmed by the consideration, that when speaking of the condemnation of such as are "without law," the apostle ever limits this to such as "have sinned," that is, by actual personal transgression.

The pardon of personal offences is connected, for particular reasons, with a personal reception of the truth, but redemption from relative guilt is granted without this. The former arrangement is explained by what was formerly said of the present dispensation as a moral economy, and the latter by what was said of it as a display of sovereignty. In regard to adults, the blessing is limited to such of them as receive the truth, which relates to the grace of God, but not a hint is given of any limitation as to infants. It cannot be said that this is because departed infants were not, in the eye of the apostle, or had not been previously mentioned by him, for he most explicitly refers to them, and reasons from the prevalence of death over them. Indeed, it is impossible to reason on the effects of the sin of Adam, without including their fate in the discussion. Besides, their case is introduced for the express purpose of illustrating the plan of redemption, as well as to shew the origin of sin and of death.

The view which has just been given of the meaning of verse 17, accords with that which has been given of it by Calvin, who, in expounding it, expresses himself to the following effect :—" He makes this grace common to all, because it is set before all, though not in fact extended, (that is, by special sovereign interposition) to all. For though Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, and He is offered indifferently to all by the bounty of God, yet all do not receive him."

The subject in discussion here, it ought to be observed, is not the influence by which men are inclined, or excited, to receive the truth, but the full warrant which every sinner of mankind has, to come as he is to the Saviour, in the confidence of obtaining mercy, and consequently it includes the reason why any of them perish, namely, that they will not come to him for life. *a* Men possess all the requisites of moral obligation, and the refusal of the message of mercy is a voluntary deed which is righteously followed by its natural result. Though Divine influence *excites* the sinner to go to him; it is not his *warrant* to go in the confidence of obtaining life, for this warrant is in the free calls and invitations of the gospel itself. The question at last, will not be—By what influence or means were you led to accept the grace of the

a Matth. xi. 28. John v. 40.

gospel, but *did* you embrace it? Proper ideas on this subject serve to show the harmony which subsists between the view now given of the present dispensation, and the foreknowledge of God, the special design of Christ in his death, and the eventual fate of mankind.

“ All the hearers of the gospel, who remain and perish in their unbelief, must prove utterly inexcusable, without having any apology for themselves from the doctrine of particular redemption. They cannot pretend that others who come to Christ, have any better ground than they to go upon. In a word, they have no shadow of excuse, as if they had found themselves any way debarred from Christ, and left under any necessity of perishing without him : Seeing all their estrangement from him is voluntary, and the tenor of their indictment must be to the following effect, that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.” *a*

Some, indeed think, that by receiving the abundance of grace, nothing more is meant than being made partakers of it. But granting this, the meaning of the passage will be substantially the same; for it is evident, from the whole tenor of scripture, that all who receive the truth are, without a single exception, made partakers of its blessings. Since, then,

a Adam Gibb's Sacred Contemplations, p. 347, 348.

the ground of condemnation, in the case of adults, is by obvious implication declared to be actual transgression, and particularly the rejection of the truth, and since there is not a word said of any ground on which children dying in infancy shall be finally condemned, does it not follow that all of them are saved? Their salvation is taken for granted, in the apostle's reasoning concerning the superior glory which is displayed in the redemption of actual transgressors, because it was his desire to dwell on that which most illustriously manifests the exceeding riches of the mercy and the grace of God.

It has repeatedly been mentioned, that one grand object of the reasoning in this passage, is to illustrate the plan of redemption by the constitution established with Adam. Now, the great thing insisted on, is the correspondence between the manner in which mankind came to be involved in guilt, and that in which they come to be accepted as righteous. As to those blessings which now come upon them who eventually perish, they form a part of the arrangements necessary to the accomplishment of the plan of Heaven, as including a moral economy, as well as a dispensation of Sovereign goodness, and they by no means interfere with the illustration which is given of the manner in which the blessings, exclusively enjoyed by the people of Christ, are communicated to *them*.

The sum of the apostle's reasoning is, that as all mankind, through the offence of their common re-

presentative are treated as guilty, inasmuch as they sustain the loss of the chartered benefits which they had otherwise enjoyed, so through the righteousness of Christ, all who are his spiritual seed, by union with Him are treated as righteous, inasmuch as they obtain the benefits of his obedience unto death. As many are thus treated as sinners, previous to the consideration of their personal transgression, so many are treated as though they were righteous previous to the consideration of their personal obedience. Actual transgression, in the one case, springs from connexion with Adam, and personal obedience in the other, from connexion with Christ, though not exactly in the same way; but the question at present respects a change of state, and not a change of character. The reference is not to a transfusion of qualities, but to a transference of fruits and consequences. The meaning is not, that the deed of one becomes by some process the actual deed of another, for no process could possibly cause this: The meaning simply is, that the latter, in consequence of a legal connexion with the former, is treated in law as *though* it were his, inasmuch as he sustains the loss incurred by it or enjoys the benefit procured by it.

Such is the scriptural import of the imputation of sin, on the one hand, and of righteousness on the other, when the reference is not to the doer of either, but to those who are treated as one with him in law. Now, what is there in this reasoning

of the apostle, which in the least militates against the universal salvation of infants? Grant the premises that have been stated, and it will only follow, that all who die in infancy, form a part of the spiritual seed of the second Adam. There is nothing in this view of the subject, which can interfere with the great doctrines generally meant to be conveyed under the representation of Adam as a federal head. What the scriptures say of the covenant ratified at Sinai, and the new covenant confirmed by the sacrifice of Christ, ought certainly to be applied to those subjects, but this by no means controverts the commonly received and scriptural doctrines, that had Adam continued obedient, his seed had, in virtue of the implied engagement of God, been confirmed in holiness and happiness, and that depravity and death in his posterity, as well as in himself, result from the forfeiture incurred by his one offence, as the representative of mankind. Of course there is not the vestige of a reason for supposing, that the universal salvation of departed infants is in the least inconsistent with the argument, concerning the public characters sustained by the first and the second Adam.

On the contrary, the slightest reflection will show, that when the apostle so closely connects the character of the first man, as "the figure of Him that was to come," with the consequences of his sin on those who have not sinned after the similitude of his transgression, one object in view is, to

afford thereby an illustration of the analogy which subsists between the constitution established with Adam, and that which has been established with Christ. As through the offence of the former, infants without personal sin were subjected to death, so through the atonement of the latter, without any personal act of obedience, they are put in possession of the blessings of his kingdom. Now, the striking resemblance between the way in which they come to be involved in the consequences of the fall, and that in which men are saved through Christ, shows that one design of God, in the establishment of the first constitution, and in suffering them to be involved in its curse, was to afford a lucid illustration of the plan of redemption; and does it not follow, according to the comparison instituted here between the one and the other, that as they are liable to nothing more than the consequences of the first offence, so they are saved through Christ.

It is evidently the design of the apostle, not only to teach that those who have actually embraced the gospel, are accepted through the work of Christ as they fell through the sin of Adam, and by this means to establish and comfort believers, but he designs also to exhibit a clear statement of that way of acceptance which is revealed in the gospel, in order that *all* who hear it may be led to understand and receive it. Of course his reasoning respects the full provision which is made for the redemption of all who come to the Saviour, and not

merely the happiness of those who have actually come to him. In a word, it is not an abstract discussion, but a subject full of practical bearings both on the comfort of Christians, and on the privileges of all who enjoy the light that points the way to acceptance.

Now, the case of infants directly bears on this view of the subject, because, in appointing faith to be the medium through which adults come to partake of the blessings of mercy, the correspondence of which we speak is carefully preserved. "Salvation is by faith, that it may be of grace,"^a because though faith be an exercise of the mind, it is an exercise of it to which, when considered in itself, we never think of attaching the smallest degree of merit. It is not on the ground of faith in the gospel, as a work performed by them that sinners obtain mercy, but entirely for the sake of that sacrifice in which they confide; and faith is merely the channel by which the Divine testimony concerning this sacrifice is conveyed to their minds. The blessing of pardon, indeed, could not be enjoyed were the mind left unrenewed, and therefore the gift of it is connected with faith, that while a title to eternal life is obtained, meetness for it may also be enjoyed; for as we cannot derive benefit from food without eating it, or advantage from medicine

^a Rom. iv, 16.

without using it, so neither can we be sanctified by the truth if we do not believe it. *a*

It is most dangerous to represent the gospel as a new law, more mild and easy than the former, for the two great commandments of the law, with the whole precepts comprehended under them, continue fully in force; but the gospel, as a grant of privileges is now connected with them, and by motives taken from it, the duties of the law are chiefly enforced. This arrangement is accounted for by the consideration, that the introduction and discovery of new relations, arising from benefits exhibited or conferred, produce new obligations according to the different circumstances of the subjects. If, then, the whole efficacy of faith arises from its object, it is easy to see, that the salvation of infants who are incapable of believing, serves to illustrate and confirm this, and is therefore of considerable importance in the economy of Heaven. In this sense, as well as in others, we must "receive the kingdom of God as little children."

Since, then, faith in itself is neither in whole nor in part the ground of acceptance with God, and since the end for which it is appointed to be the medium of acceptance in the case of adult persons, can doubtless be gained in dying infants, by the

a See Erskine's Essay on Faith, where this subject is fully and perspicuously illustrated.

sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God, there is every thing in the nature of the case to warrant the conclusion, that all of them are saved. “ Infants are as capable of regeneration as grown persons, and there is abundant reason to conclude, that all those who have not lived to commit actual transgressions, though they share in the effects of the first Adam’s offence, will also share in the blessings of the second Adam’s gracious covenant, without their personal faith and obedience, but not without the regenerating influence of the Spirit of God upon their souls.” *a*

We are thus presented with an illustration of the way of acceptance with God, which exhibits to every sinner of mankind, the riches and freeness of the grace of Heaven, which encourages every one to come to the Saviour, and which removes every objection arising from a fear, that salvation is incompatible with the honour and righteousness of Jehovah. How important, then, that view of the subject, which shows the abundant provision which is made for the redemption of sinners of every class and of every character.

This passage, then, will open perspicuously to our view, if in the first place we consider the points in which the benefit and the damage correspond, and in which they are co-extensive as to their sub-

a Scott, on Matt. xix. 13—15.

jects; and if, in the second place, we omit the consideration of the numbers that finally perish in their sins, or that are ultimately saved through Christ, as one of those secrets which belong not to us, and which we ought wholly to leave to the righteous, merciful and only wise God, and so only consider the superabounding benefit which believers of the truth, and children dying in infancy, derive from the Redeemer, as compared with the loss sustained in Adam by the human race. “The thoughts of the *supposed* vast majority of those who shall eventually perish, is apt to encumber our minds in such contemplations. I say *supposed*, for *probably* we shall find our conjectures on this subject erroneous, when the doom of men, through all ages and nations, shall be finally determined.” *a* Instead of starting curious and untaught questions, it is for us to rest satisfied that every subject of the moral government, shall, as an accountable agent, receive an equitable doom, and that as God is a gracious Sovereign as well as a righteous Lawgiver, we may well leave it to him to order his dispensations as he sees meet. But as his treatment of accountable agents cannot be applicable to those who never were the subjects of moral rule, we need not doubt that all who die in a state of infancy are saved.

It may be proper to mention, that though the great thing insisted on in the latter part of Rom. v.

a Scott, on Rom. v. 15—19.

is the way in which a change of state is effected, yet the chief blessing of the gospel is a change of character. The doctrine of justification derives its principle value from its being the moral means of effecting this change. *a*

It may here be added, that the apostle never refers to the subject of our connexion with Adam, without adverting to the redemption of Christ. Though there can be no injustice done us in placing us in our present circumstances, yet this certainly is made more apparent by the manifestation of the character of God in the work of the Saviour. Though, in consequence of the sin of Adam, we are doomed to affliction and death, yet as God hath for our sakes given up his own Son to redeem all from the penal consequences of that sin, and to deliver from the second death all who believe in him, we have the most convincing evidence that there was nothing in the Adamic constitution in the least inconsistent with the Divine rectitude or goodness. Success cannot make a transaction equitable, and neither does a failure constitute a stipulation wrong. Since the dispensation established with Adam, has been the introduction to that established with Christ, and is chiefly employed to illustrate it, why dwell on the former to the exclusion of the latter, and why

a See Letters, Practical and Consolatory Vol. i. Letter viii. and Vol. ii. Letters 24th and 25th.

speak as if the direct consequences of the first offence were designed to be permanent? The gospel is illustrated by the dispensation which terminated in the sin of Adam, but it is so by viewing the latter as a representation of facts. If we seek, in the first instance, to be fully satisfied as to all the moral bearings of these facts on the perfections of God, and the relations between Him and man, and postpone the consideration of the gospel, we egregiously err.

Independently of the plan of mercy, the ways of God no doubt must have been just, and therefore, all that is meant by this reasoning is, that the dispensation of the gospel ought to satisfy our minds, in regard to the original constitution, though we should feel unable to solve every difficulty, and ought to put down every objection, however plausible its appearance. When we take our station at the cross, and there contemplate the union of mercy and truth, of righteousness and peace in the work of redemption, and when from thence we turn to the celestial paradise prepared for all who embrace the gospel, can we fail to be convinced, that the whole of the constitution established with Adam must have been worthy of the justice and goodness of God, and that the dismal result of the breach of it, is nothing more than a righteous retribution. If, when viewed by itself, it should appear beset with difficulties, yet surely when viewed in connexion with the new dispensation, the obscurity which seemed to rest upon it will vanish; or, if a

degree of it remain, we shall feel convinced that this arises from our not being able to trace the connexions and reciprocal relations of the various and complicated parts of the high administration of Heaven.

The doctrines of scripture, therefore, should be viewed in full orb, and our ideas of them ought to be formed from a careful comparison of the various dispensations of God, in which different phases or views of them are exhibited. If partial views alone are taken of the representations of scripture, it is by no means matter of surprise, that they should occasion perplexity and error. But how satisfying is it to contemplate the harmony and glory of all the revelation of Heaven, as displayed in the kingdom of the Saviour !

The following celebrated Epitaph on four infant children, comprises the substance of the foregoing argument.

Bold Infidelity ! turn pale and die ;
 Beneath this stone, four infants' ashes lie ;
 Say, are they lost or saved ?
 If death's by sin, they sinn'd because they're here ;
 If heaven's by works, in heaven they can't appear.
 Reason, ah ! how depraved !
 Revere the sacred page, the knots untied ;
 They died, for Adam sinn'd :—they live, for Jesus died.

SECTION VII.

THERE are various passages of scripture, in which children are expressly spoken of as objects of the special care of God, and these now claim our consideration.

The people of Judah are severely reprov'd for having profaned the city of God, by filling it with the blood of innocents. *a* They are also called on to gather the children, and those who suck the breasts, and to sanctify a fast in the hope of obtaining mercy. *b* Such expressions of regard for children, are employed by God, when denouncing judgments, and calling for deep humiliation, in order to excite a sense of the evil of maltreating them ; to induce the people to be more fervent in prayer for themselves and for them ; to mark a difference between them and actual transgressors, that the latter might be humbled and alarmed, and to intimate, that such was the regard of God towards infants, that for their sakes he would the more readily "be jealous for his land, and pity his people." Such declarations serve, then, to illustrate the general principle, that the Divine benignity particularly ex-

a Jer. xix. 3—5.

b Joel, ii. 16, 17, 18.

tends to them. This conviction led Jehoshaphat, when imploring deliverance from his enemies, to call together the people with their little ones and their children. *a* Now, it appears unreasonable to suppose, that the Divine compassion should be so strongly expressed, in regard to temporal and inferior circumstances only, and forsake its objects for ever, on their entering on an everlasting and unutterably important condition. God is indeed introduced as lamenting the circumstances of many, who notwithstanding finally perish; but the design of such compassionate expostulations is to show, that the ruin of sinners is wholly chargeable on themselves, and is not owing to any unwillingness on his part to receive the returning prodigal. But, in the case of infants, there is no room for such expostulations. Solemn warnings, and pathetic admonitions, may be given to many who persist to the last in their sins, and finally perish in them, but how different is the case of those who are quite unconscious of the expressions of Divine compassion, and who never could despise them?

We find that the Divine regard for the infants in Nineveh, is given as a reason why the city was spared. In vindicating His procedure towards that city, God gives his fretful prophet as a reason for it, his compassion for the multitudes in it who

a 2 Chron. xx, 13.

could not discern between their right and their left. *a* Now, if *this* was a display of goodness in which he could glory, how much more illustrious must that plan of mercy be, which has provided for the everlasting salvation and blessedness of innumerable myriads of infants. It claims our attention here, that the infants in Nineveh were not spared merely because the inhabitants repented, but that on the contrary, the Divine regard for the former is given as a reason why Jehovah the more readily spared the latter, even after their repentance. It is true, that had not the adult inhabitants repented, the infants had shared in the calamities of the city, but it is conceivable that He who the more readily spared the penitent for the sake of their helpless children, would have doomed those very children to perdition, had not the parents repented. Does not the spirit of the history show, that if not guilty of actual rebellion, the children would be saved, happen what might to the city? If it be said, that the result of the offences of Adam as to such, would prevent the exercise of kindness towards them, in relation to eternity, it is sufficient to reply, that much more would it prevent its exercise towards them in relation to mere temporal evils. The latter, we see, it did not, and therefore the former it would not.

a Jonah, iv. 9, 10, 11.

The Saviour expressed particular regard for children, and at all times looked upon them with peculiar fondness. We repeatedly find, that he was displeased with his disciples, but on no occasion do we find him more so, than when they endeavoured to prevent infants from being brought to Him. We are told, that when he saw this, he was *much* displeased.^a Now, as the intention of his disciples appears to have been, upon the whole, good, for they seem to have thought that the introduction of children to Him for any purpose, while he was occupied in instructing the old, was a reprehensible intrusion, how are we to account for the very great displeasure which was felt by him. Is it not most natural to conclude, that it arose from the consideration, that such had been the uniform kindness which marked his conduct towards children, that his disciples might have been fully satisfied, that on no occasion would he deem the office of blessing them unseasonable or unwelcome. His displeasure was in no instance causeless, and it was a just reason for it at this time, that the disciples, after what they had seen in him, and particularly after the discourse, in regard to children, recorded in Matth. xviii. 1—14, were much to blame in thinking it an unnecessary intrusion to bring such to him, or that it would be

^a Mark x. 13, 14. Matth. xix. 13, 14.

beneath Him to notice infants. "Suffer little children," he said, "to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." *a* "This emphatic declaration, uttered by Him when he took up the little children in his arms and blessed them, is such an unequivocal expression of pure benevolence to infants, that to suppose them to be as such excluded from the design and benefits of his death, is to impute to his words a palpable impropriety." Whether we understand the kingdom of God as referring to the Christian dispensation, or the felicity of the heavenly state, where the reign of Christ shall be consummated, infants, though incapable of faith, must be connected with it. He is not at present holding up infants as examples of that child-like disposition which ought to distinguish his disciples, but is giving a reason why little children should be brought to Him, and why it was wrong to endeavour to prevent this. It surely will not be supposed that he meant to say, "Suffer infants to be brought to me, for my kingdom consists only of adult persons, resembling such in their disposition."

The expression, "Of such is the kingdom of God," means, then, that "of such it is in a great measure made up," because they will form a very great proportion of the redeemed family of Hea-

a Luke xviii. 16.

ven. The Saviour appears to have had the universal salvation of all of them who die in infancy in his view. His reasoning is not, "of persons resembling such in temper and disposition is the kingdom made up, for this, as has already been hinted, would not warrant the conclusion drawn, namely, that children ought not to be hindered from being brought to Him, in order to be blessed, for on the same principle he might have said, "Suffer doves and lambs to be brought unto me to be blessed, for of persons resembling such is the kingdom of God made up." Now, this would prove too much; consequently it proves nothing. His words, then, must respect children literally; and his blessing such ensures their salvation. It is to no purpose to deny this conclusion by saying, that though our Lord wept over Jerusalem, yet Jerusalem fell, for there is a wide and an essential difference between a lamentation over the obstinacy of active rebels, and a benediction poured upon infants, between a warning of impending danger, and an assurance, that "of such is the kingdom of Heaven." Nor can the words be construed to respect only the particular children then brought to Him, or any particular class of children exclusively, for the expression, "Of such," is comprehensive of all who never get beyond the condition of infancy.

The salvation of infants must doubtless be of pure favour, for they come into the world destitute of the moral image of God, and exposed to

corruption, so that they are unfit for the enjoyment of heavenly bliss, as well as liable to the consequences of Adam's sin. They need, therefore, to be washed in the blood of the Lamb, and regenerated by his Spirit. It is true, that our Lord held up little children as examples to his disciples, and in illustration of what every individual must become, in order to his being a subject of his kingdom. But this did not imply, that infants are not the subjects of a depraved nature, for the only thing meant by our Lord is, that their infantile feelings of willing dependence on their parents, their indifference as to rank and precedence, and their disposition to credit whatever their parents, or teachers may say to them, serve to illustrate that teachable and humble spirit which is necessary in the disciples of Christ. It is by implicit subjection of mind to the doctrine of God, the proper disposition of learners, that men are led to subject themselves to the truth, and so to become meet for the kingdom of heaven. Our Lord is not exactly teaching what a Christian ought to be, for doubtless he ought to be perfect in holiness ; he is illustrating that docile temper of mind which is necessary to induce men to submit implicitly to the authority of God, and so to receive the truth, without implicitly receiving which, they cannot become members, much less eminent characters, in his kingdom. When he says, then, that except we become as little children, we cannot enter the kingdom

of heaven, he is not teaching that infants are entirely free from depravity, for this were to say, that no one can be a disciple of Christ unless he be perfectly holy, which would be like saying, that men must first be completely cured of their moral maladies, in order to their submitting themselves to that wholesome instruction by which alone they can be healed. He is speaking of that state of mind which leads men to *come* and to *continue* under the medicinal truth of the gospel, by which their cure is at last perfected.

The comparison of this tractable and lowly temper, with that of little children, refers not to what they are by nature, but to what they happen to be by constitution,—the texture of their tender frame, and their accidental inability to exercise their faculties as they do when advanced in life. Their infantile feelings, though in themselves possessed of no moral quality, are capable of being sanctified by the Spirit of God, so that infants may, on entering the heavenly world, exhibit the lincaments of the Christian character.

There is nothing, then, in the sentiment now pleaded for, which in the least affects the doctrine of original sin. The question does not at all respect the evil tendencies of children, for these are by no means denied; the question is, ‘Do the Scriptures teach, that from those evil tendencies, and from the other consequences of the sin of Adam,

all who die in infancy shall be saved through the atonement and Spirit of Christ?

It has already been stated, that the connexion which has been established between faith and salvation, by no means interferes with the sentiment in question. Besides, as the requirements of Heaven always respect the natural capabilities of the subjects of law, children are no more excluded by this connexion, than they are doomed to starvation by the apostolic injunction, that "if any will not work, neither should he eat." It is easy to apply this to the declaration, "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned." Were it otherwise, then *all* infants would be excluded from salvation, and not merely some of them.

It is to no purpose to adduce, the passions which children often discover at a very early period, as instances of *actual* transgression, and as the ground of an objection to what is now pleaded for. We ought to beware of confounding mere animal instincts, with things of a moral nature, and "paroxysms of pain, with paroxysms of passion." Infants are described as knowing neither good nor evil, *a* and their ignorance is not that which the scriptures condemn, for the latter, is such only as is *wilful*, and which besides, is not total, but re-

a Deut. i. 39.

spects matters, ignorance about which is not only consistent with the knowledge of other things, but derives its criminality from that very knowledge. Now, as infants, in regard to knowledge, are not moral agents, so neither are they such in regard to the feelings of their minds.

Respecting the time when God may be pleased to change their hearts by his Spirit, whether before or at the time of their dissolution, it does not seem to be of great importance to inquire. He who imparted his moral likeness to Adam, immediately at his creation, and gave his Holy Spirit to John, while in his mothers womb, ought not to be limited. We cannot say what may be the *mode* of the Divine operations, in regard to such, and no practical benefit could we derive from the knowledge of it. The Almighty can doubtless instantaneously raise from infantile weakness and ignorance, to the perfection of heavenly light and holy purity. This will afford a display of the Divine power, which will be deeply impressive. Christians who have long known the truth upon earth, though through a glass darkly, understand something of the celestial glory, before they enter on it, but what must be the feelings of infants, on being suddenly translated to the full radiance of the heavenly inheritance, and what the feelings of others on witnessing this striking display of Almighty power?

What prevents the full renovation of Christians

on earth, but the weakness and unsettledness of their faith in the gospel, and will not the full blaze of its lustre at once assimilate the whole soul to itself? "The germ of life and of glory," which was here implanted in the infant mind, will burst forth instantaneously into a full and vigorous life, and the heart will be impressed with the beauty and grandeur of the character of God, and capacitated for the services and the bliss of the celestial sanctuary.

When we remember, how God taught the children of Jerusalem, to offer up their artless hosannas in the temple, how their praises were accepted of the Saviour, and how they seem to have relieved and gladdened the mind of the Man of sorrows, as he thought of the obstinate unbelief, and impending fate of that city, over which he mournfully wept, we cannot but recommend them to God, in the confidence that his power and his goodness are always the same.

Some of the most esteemed expositors apprehend, that our Lord's language, in Matth. xviii. 1—14, is to be understood as including children literally, as well as humble-minded disciples, in the same way that Psalm viii. 2. is applied literally to babes and sucklings, as well as to those who, in regard to mental powers, external circumstances, or dispositions of mind may be compared to them. *a*

But whatever may be thought as to this, it will not in the least effect the interpretation which has just been given of the passage in Matth. xix. 13, 14, 15. With regard to it, the application to children literally, appears indispensably requisite to the maintenance of consistency in the reasoning, and by it the principle now pleaded for is completely established. Dr Dwight, in speaking of the interpretation which makes our Lord say, "Suffer little children to come unto me, because the kingdom of God is composed of Christians, that is, of such as have a child-like disposition," says that "it is undeserving of a refutation." *a*

It deserves consideration, too, that even those passages in which children are exhibited as examples of what is essential to the Christian character, seem strongly to imply that all of them who die in infancy are saved, for it appears utterly incongruous that those who in a certain state of existence are patterns of this, should, when they die in that very state, be excluded from the kingdom of Heaven. It were strange, indeed, to suppose, that the benevolent Saviour would expatiate, with evident pleasure, on the illustration afforded by their infantile feelings of that simplicity of mind which is indispensably necessary to discipleship, while yet they might in an instant be consigned by him to

everlasting perdition. If it be said, that though this be true of the infant or infants, whom he actually took in his arms, and held up for the instruction of his followers, it may not be true as to infants in general, it may be said in reply, that our Lord's manner of expressing himself seems purposely chosen to guard against any such restriction, for he says, "Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in my name, receiveth me." *a* Besides, the very nature of the case shows, that he was not speaking of any thing peculiar in the child he had in his arms, but was holding him up as a specimen of what is common to all children at the same stage of existence, so that what is true of one, must be true of all. The judgment, as well as the feelings of the heart, suggest this as the natural conclusion to be drawn from the language and the manner of our Lord, in the circumstances in question.

When we reflect on the salvation of infants, and think on the immense multitudes who die in a state of infancy, we cannot but dwell on the delightful promises that the children of God shall be in number as the sand on the sea shore—as the drops of the morning dew—in a word, that they shall be innumerable. Not that the salvation of such is the only thing illustrative of such promises ; far, very

a Mark ix. 36, 37.

far from it,—but that it is one thing which throws light on them, and that it ought not to be overlooked.

The late celebrated Mr John Newton, whose attachment to evangelical truth is well known and generally acknowledged, introduces this sentiment in the 50th Sermon of his work, entitled, “The Messiah.” Speaking of the innumerable multitude which the apostle John saw in vision, he expresses his persuasion that our Lord is stating a *fact*, when he says in regard to children, “Of such is the kingdom of God,” and that the reference is to the number of departed infants, as exceeding the aggregate number of adult believers, so far as that his kingdom may be said to consist of them, and that these go to make up the innumerable company of the saved.

This view of the subject accounts for the language of David on the death of his child, “I shall go to him,” said he, “but he shall not return to me.” He felt none of that bitter anguish which he afterwards felt on the death of Absalom. He anticipated, not merely his own departure to the world of spirits, for in that world there is no social intercourse between the saved and the lost; he expected to follow his child, not only to the grave, but “to heaven and eternal happiness, where his soul was, as he comfortably hoped and believed.” *a* On no other principle, indeed, could

a Gill, on 2 Samuel, xii, 23.

the thought relieve him from the extreme trouble and affliction which he then felt.

It may not be improper to mention here, that this supposes that the redeemed shall know each other in the heavenly world. It seems strange that this should ever have been doubted, for in the nature of the thing it must add to our happiness. If it be said, that the knowledge that certain of our friends *are not* there will be a source of misery, it is sufficient to reply, that the denial of the knowledge in question supposes a state of utter uncertainty as to who are in heaven, and every one knows that this is a state the most distressing of all. Of course this is less favourable to happiness than the other view of the subject. The fact is, that all inferior feelings will be swallowed up in the love of God, and in a conviction of the fitness of His proceedings.

SECTION VIII.

I SHALL now examine some objections which have been made to this comfortable doctrine.

The first objection which I shall notice, is that which is taken from the fact, that children are often involved in the crimes and temporal ruin of their parents. Much has been said of those children on whom God visited the iniquities of their fathers, as if this militated against the final salvation of infants. This dispensation, however, is applicable to men, not as individuals, but as members of society, and not to their eternal state, but to their condition in the present life. God, in his providence, deals with nations and other bodies as if they were persons. Thus the crimes of a nation frequently accumulate from generation to generation, like the sins of an individual from youth to age; and calamities are in consequence inflicted on a people at one time for sins committed by them at another, just as a judgment comes upon a man in his old age, for sins committed in his youth.^a Nations and other public bodies are punished as

^a Gen. xv. 16. Matth. xxiii. 32, 31—36. Isaiah lxx. 6, 7.

such only in the present life, for in the eternal world mankind are dealt with as individuals, although the sins of which they were individually guilty as members of society on earth, will certainly be brought into judgment. Though as individuals, many who suffer in this life may be comparatively innocent, yet as members of a guilty society, their sufferings are necessary in order the more remarkably to manifest the Divine displeasure against the sins of the community. Considered, however, as individuals, they are answerable only for their personal offences, and according to their personal character will their future condition be determined. The eternal state, therefore, of the children who died in consequence of the sins of their parents, is not in the least affected by that dispensation, for temporal calamities alone are inflicted by it.

If children, indeed, imitated the sins of their parents, and thereby justified them, and in one sense made them their own, then the judgments which followed were inflicted, not merely in consequence of the sins of their parents, but actually for their own transgressions. Thus the sins of the people of Judah, from the days of Manasseh, were punished in that generation which went to Babylon, because they persisted in the practice of similar iniquities. They indeed said, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge,—the ways of the Lord are not equal." But the

spirit of the reply made by God is, that no injustice was done them, because they deserved more than was inflicted on account of *their own sins*, and that the reason why the nation had not been punished before was, that the Lord was longsuffering, and had therefore exercised forbearance to the third and fourth generation, when he might have punished both their fathers and them. Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, does not intend punishing the latter for the iniquities of the former, whatever be their character and conduct, and though they abhor and renounce the sins of their fathers, and love and serve God. Their character is supposed to be like to that of their ungodly parents, and they therefore suffer for their own evil dispositions and behaviour. *a* Had Judah, in the days of Ezekiel, been righteous, they would not have been sent into captivity for what had been done in the days of Manasseh, but as they walked in the steps of their fathers, they were treated accordingly. *b* It is the third and fourth generation of them that *hate* God, on whom the iniquities of the fathers are visited. *c* This dispensation is well fitted to impress the minds of parents with a sense of the deep responsibility that attaches to

a Jeremiah xliv. 9—11.

Mal. iii. 7.

Psalm xlix. 13.

b Ezekiel xviii. 1—20, and xx. 30, 36. *c* Exodus xx. 5.

Num. xxxii. 14.

them, and to induce them to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It warns them, in the most solemn manner, of the probable dismal effects and consequences of an evil example, by the connexion which it supposes will often be found between the conduct of parents, and that not only of their immediate, but even of their distant offspring.

While the delay of judgment was an exercise of longsuffering, the declaration that it would come in the third or fourth generation, was calculated to enlist natural affection on the side of duty, because parents might live to see the judgment descend on their children and on their children's children. *a* On the other hand, as the children were punished only when they imitated the sins of their fathers, it admonished them of the paramount authority of God. How often do men, as an apology for what is wrong, plead the example of their parents, and how often is a corrupt religion adhered to, and all impartial examination shunned, under the plea, that their religion is that which their fathers professed.

It ought to be remembered, that actual offenders alone are referred to, when it is said, "Every one shall die for his own iniquity." *b* This was saying, that (at least for a time) he would punish both fa-

a Job xxi. 19, 20. *b* Jer. xxxi. 30.

ther and son, and not the latter only; the one for the bad example which he had set, and the other for following it. It is evident, too, that he is speaking of the *mass* of the people, when he so strikingly delineates the wickedness of their character, and threatens to punish them. There were some among them who not only feared the Lord, but feared him greatly, who notwithstanding suffered in the general calamity,—witness Jeremiah and others. Important ends were to be answered by this dispensation, and to the righteous he would make it a blessing. Now, as the share which such had in the common distress, did not by any means involve their final condemnation, so neither will the share which infants had in it, prove that this was *their* fate.

As a proof that the infliction of death on children, in consequence of the sins of their parents, did not involve their final condemnation, the case of Abijah may here be adduced. God would not spare his life, because ruin had been denounced against the house of his father Jeroboam, but his early death was converted into a blessing, inasmuch as he was thereby preserved from the sufferings and the ignominy which awaited the rest of his family. “He only of Jeroboam,” said God, “shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel.” *a*

a 1 Kings, xiv. 1, 10—13.

His affliction, then, we are thus assured, was overruled in subserviency to his spiritual and temporal good.

The sentence of death has been passed on all, and, as has already been stated, it rests with God at what time and in what manner, whether by disease or by violence it shall be carried into execution. The providence of Heaven consists of many parts, and the same means are made subservient to a great variety of ends. While by the execution of the general sentence of death he solemnly reminds us of the entrance of sin, he at the same time and by the same means expresses his abhorrence of particular crimes, holds out a salutary lesson to survivors, and paves the way for many other occurrences. The same view of the subject is exhibited in the indiscriminate manner in which judgments often come upon the world.

How many of the excellent of the earth have perished in public calamities ! In particular instances, God has indeed interposed to preserve some such, but the general rule is, that "no man can tell either love or hatred by that which is before him, for all things happen alike to all." It does not follow, therefore, from the death of infants at the deluge, in the cities of the plain, or in any calamity, that they were consigned to the state of misery. It may be added, that had God preserved the infants of the Antedeluvian world, what would have been done with them ? The small fa-

mily of Noah could not have taken charge of them. Without a continued exertion of miraculous power, corresponding to which there is nothing in scripture, they must inevitably have perished in a more dreadful way. The same remark is applicable to many other instances, in which children were cut off with their parents. They were truly "taken from the evil to come." It is in vain to dwell upon the application of the term *righteous* to the inhabitants of Sodom, for when the Lord said, that if but ten righteous persons were found in it, he would not destroy it, the term cannot properly apply to mere children, for it evidently denotes those principles and deeds of which they are not the capable subjects. The reference, then, must be to adults. There were doubtless many more than ten infants in the city; and upon the principle, that all such "are of their own nature inclined to evil," how could God expect to find any righteous among *them*? The death of such, while it took place in consequence of their connexion with Adam, was only so far connected with the sins of their immediate parents, as to be in its time and circumstances a mark of the Divine displeasure with *them* also, and a lasting warning to parents in general.

This view of the subject explains such passages as this, "Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body." *a*

The reference, so far as mere infants are concerned, is to the temporal calamities inflicted by the law of Moses, denounced during that law, and not to eternal perdition. Thus, when it is said, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," ^a the meaning cannot be, that every one who is thus ignominiously exposed is finally condemned, for to the thief on the cross it was said by the Saviour, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." The design of this declaration respecting the curse, was to intimate, that Christ should be made a curse for us, but not by any means to teach, that those who thus suffered should necessarily perish for ever. In like manner, the other declaration referred to, respects the present, and not the eternal condition of those who fell under its weight in consequence of the sins of their parents. In so far, again, as it may respect the fate of those children who followed the evil example of their fathers, it has nothing to do with infants.. In full harmony with these views, we find that God, when denouncing the death of infants, as an expression of His displeasure against the sins of their parents, so far from expressing any immediate anger against the children, He expresses a desire for their welfare, by saying, "Wherefore commit ye this great evil against your souls, to cut off from you man,

^a Gal. iii. 10. Deut. xxi. 23.

and woman, and child, and suckling out of Judah, to leave none of you to remain?" *a*

It is one thing for children to be subjected to temporal inconveniences and losses, and to a *pre-mature* death in consequence of the sins of their immediate parents, and quite another to be doomed to eternal misery because of them. The former can be changed into a blessing, but the latter can not. The evils to which they are subjected on earth, no more prove that they are doomed to final perdition, than the afflictions of Christians prove, that they suffer because they are to be "condemned with the world." The fact is, that every one who shall finally inherit everlasting life in the heavenly paradise, must of necessity be placed more or less in the condition of the earthly Adam, and must therefore be exposed to those evils which fall to the lot of children, for according to the existing constitution of things, the gracious purposes of God cannot otherwise be accomplished.

A particular objection has been taken from the history of the deluge, on which it will be proper to make some remarks, the spirit of which will apply to all objections of a similar nature.

The objection supposes, that because the overthrow of the old world was an emblem of the final overthrow of the present system, and of the punish-

a Jer. xliv. 7, compared with Ezek. ix. 6, and Luke xxiii. 28, 29,

ment of the wicked, and the security of the family of Noah an emblem of the salvation of Christians, therefore all who were without the ark perished eternally. But in order to make the parallel complete, it must be maintained, that all who were preserved in the ark were eternally saved. Now, this cannot be proved, for we have decisive evidence that Ham, who was preserved in it, was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Since, therefore, we cannot say that all who were in the ark were saved from the wrath to come, neither can we say that all who were without it were finally condemned to it.

The fact is, that the temporal punishment of one class, and the temporal deliverance of another, may be designed to pre-figure spiritual destruction on the one hand, and eternal salvation on the other, while some of the former may be finally saved, and some of the latter may ultimately perish. For example, the fall of the generation that left Egypt, was an emblem of the final ruin of unbelievers, and the entrance of the next generation into Canaan, was a figure of the entrance of the redeemed into the heavenly inheritance, yet we know that numbers who fell in the wilderness were eternally saved, and that some who entered Canaan fell short of the celestial country. This example is as good as a thousand arguments on the subject. It decidedly illustrates the nature of the typical deliverance and overthrow at the flood, and disproves the reason-

ings which have been drawn from that dispensation against the salvation of infants.

To say that we are taught by what took place at the flood, what proportion there shall ultimately be between the saved and the condemned, is directly to oppose the Scriptures, which represent the number of the former as incalculably great. This mode of straining figurative events is very unwise, and is utterly at variance with the spirit of Divine revelation. The point in comparison in such cases, is not the proportion which the saved and the lost will at last bear to each other, but simply the certain salvation of the righteous, and the certain condemnation of the wicked, and therefore neither the eternal condition of those who share in the typical deliverance, nor that of those who fall in the temporal calamity, is thereby determined. Of course no argument can be taken from such dispensations, against the salvation of those infants who suffered their distressing consequences.

I do not stop to inquire whether, since while there is life there is hope, some of the adults who perished in the deluge might not be led to repentance between the time at which the ark was shut, and that at which the waters overwhelmed them, so that though punished before men in the flesh, as an example, they might live before God in the spirit. My object is merely to remove the objection respecting infants, which is quite untenable, whatever may be thought respecting the condition of adults.

The apostle Peter, when speaking on this subject, refers only to the disobedient under the *preaching* of Noah. Now, of this disobedience infants could not be guilty, and therefore the passage cannot in the smallest militate against their salvation. *a* The displeasure expressed by the deluge, was against the violent and enormous wickedness with which the world was filled. *b* And it needs not to be stated, that the infants of that age were no more depraved than the infants of former generations, and that in this violence they could not participate. It is plain, then, that though there was a particular expression of the Divine indignation in that fearful catastrophe, it was not against them. They fell in consequence of the sin of Adam, and they fell at that particular time, to answer the additional purpose of showing the Divine displeasure with their parents, and thus affording a warning to those which were to follow.

It may be proper to remark here, that though what took place at the deluge, was not intended to represent the proportion which there shall finally be between the saved and the lost, yet it appears to have been designed to show the vanity of the hope, that from the multitude of transgressors there is some chance of escaping. Accordingly, it solemnly declares, that though hand join in hand, the

a 1 Pet iii. 20.

a Gen. vi. 11, 12. 13.

wicked shall not pass unpunished. Though the number of the saved will be incalculably great, the number of the condemned will not be small; and He who spared not the multitude of the ungodly then, will not spare them because of their number at last. Let every one flee to the covert of the atonement, for however many shall at last be found out of Christ, the true refuge set before them in the gospel, not one of them shall escape.

SECTION IX.

THIS naturally leads to the consideration of an objection which has been made to the doctrine in question, on the ground that the Scriptures represent the number of the saved as comparatively small. Objections of this nature arise from a misapprehension of the meaning of Scripture, in the instances referred to. The passages which speak of the fewness of the saved, respect the times preceding the general spread of the gospel, the *active* opposition of the minds of men to the pure and humbling doctrines of the cross, and their *actual* choice and pursuit of the ways of sin. They therefore do not refer to infants as such at all.

When our Lord says, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat. Strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." *a* He is obviously speaking of adults alone, and is exhibiting the holy nature of the truth, and the *active* opposition

a Matth. vii. 13, 14.

of mankind to its sacred dictates. But infants are not in his eye, for of moral actions they are utterly incapable. The greater part of the Jews rejected the counsel of God in the days of our Lord, and the greater part of mankind reject it still, for the description is far from being applicable only to the Jews or apostolic times. But the Scriptures assure us, that the time is coming when there shall be a far more extensive diffusion of the gospel than has hitherto taken place. *a* The grain of mustard seed shall become a tree so large, that the birds of heaven may lodge under the shadow of it; and the little leaven shall leaven the whole lump. *b*

The kingdom of Christ will by no means die away like an expiring lamp, for he is set to be a light to the Gentiles, and the extent and influence of the Sun of righteousness, is compared with the instruction imparted by the natural sun and the heavenly bodies, to every creature under heaven who attends to it.

Now, if the universal diffusion, and the very general reception of the truth in the latter day, be consistent with those parts of scripture which speak of the narrow bounds occupied by it for ages, there cannot be the smallest necessity for stopping, to show the consistency between those passages which speak of the smallness of the number who at par-

a Psalm xxii. 27, and lxxii. 11. Isaiah xi. 9—13. Heb. ii. 14.

b Matth. xiii. 31—34.

ticular times, or in particular places, embraced the gospel, and those which respect the salvation of innumerable infants. If we attend only to the sound of words, we may prove any thing; and hence the importance of attending to their meaning in the different connexions in which they occur.

The objection taken from the declaration, that “many are called, but few chosen,” is of no force, for in the sense intended, departed infants never were nor could be called, and to them therefore the passage by no means refers. Calvin, in expounding it, applies it to adults alone, and does not consider it as referring to the general subject of the purposes of Heaven.

When Christ says, “Fear not, little flock,” he is using the language of endearment. His meaning is, Fear not, my *dear* flock, for your Father is delighted to give you the kingdom, and will surely then give you all that you need on your way to it. *a*

When Paul says, “There is a remnant, according to the election of grace,” *b* he is speaking of his Jewish brethren alone, the greater part of whom had rejected the Saviour by obstinate unbelief, but a portion of whom had been led, by the blessing of God, to embrace that salvation which was preached as the fruit of pure grace, and not as the birthright of any privileged class, or as the reward of obedi-

a Luke xiii. 32.

b Rom. xi. 5.

ence to any law. He is treating, therefore, of the case of adults who had refused the Divine mercy, and of the particular circumstances of the Jews at the time.

It is of the first importance to compare scripture with scripture, and to examine in every instance what classes are spoken of, and what times and circumstances are intended. This is very properly done in other cases, and why not in this? Why apply to infants what is said of the rejection of the gospel feast by adults? Why employ passages which speak of active opposition to the cause of truth, to prove that there are few that shall ultimately be saved? for, granting that they prove this as to adults, they have no relation to infants.

It is in vain to adduce the scripture doctrine of the freeness and sovereignty of Divine grace as an objection, for the salvation of infants must undoubtedly be traced to this very grace, and how can grace be opposed to itself? Great care should be taken that our views of Divine grace do not confound it with something like human caprice, for notions of this kind are exceedingly unscriptural, and fearfully pernicious. If we confound the acts of the Divine sovereignty with the capricious volitions of men, we shall find, that instead of being led to cherish holy love, and profound veneration towards God, we shall feel at best but the transient flash of a selfish gladness, and a spurious gratitude. There is reason to think, that such views of the

grace of God are at the bottom of that assuming and contemptuous spirit, which is sometimes connected with professed zeal for the truth of the gospel. See this exemplified in the Jews, who gloried in themselves as the chosen people, and therefore despised others.

To say that the grace of God cannot be displayed if many are partakers of it, is to betray the most mistaken views of its nature. Did it not appear, when on the day of Pentecost he saved three thousand, as well as one Ethiopian eunuch received it? Did not the apostles “seek the profit of many, that they might be saved,” and do not they and the prophets rise above themselves, when they dwell on the progress and enlargement of the kingdom of Christ? Never, then, let it be said, that the honour of Divine mercy requires that a few only of the guilty partake of it. Is it not declared, that one great design of the plan of redemption, is to show forth the exceeding riches of the grace of God? And can the meaning of such a declaration be, that He means to save no more than is *barely* requisite to manifest, that grace is a part of his character?—Certainly not. Is it not most evident, that the import of such language is, that the blessings of mercy are imparted wherever the interests of the government of heaven do not call for exception. We are therefore warranted to expect an abundant display of the goodness of God, and in particular, to look for the manifestation of it towards all who have

never lived to be the subjects of moral Rule. How, then, can the salvation of such be an infringement of the glory of Divine grace, when it is one of the ways in which it is illustriously displayed ?

Will it still be said, that such a view of the plan of redemption is apt to make men careless, and to lead them to a presumptuous hope ? There is nothing, indeed, that the depraved heart of man will not abuse, but might it not be said, that the opposite view is apt to lead to despair ? Now, if the objector would not allow, that on his principles this were a valid argument against *his* view of the subject, it cannot be right to urge the possibility of abuse, as an argument against the other.

The Scriptures have guarded against abuse by teaching, on the one hand, that though the greatest sinners have been saved, yet the *least* as well as the greatest sins, when persisted in, will infallibly issue in the second death ; and on the other hand, that though the salvation of the very least of sinners is a display of free grace, yet the displays of this grace rise in glory, according to the number and aggravations of the sins which are forgiven, and the strength of the corruptions which are conquered. The former warns men of the danger of supposing, that because they are not so wicked as some who have been saved, *they* shall *therefore* be saved ; as if this negative goodness could furnish a plea for mercy. And the latter encourages the sinner to say, “ Whatever has been my character, yet, as

the blood of the Saviour can cleanse from all sin, to Him will I go, on the ground of his unfettered invitation." By this means, presumption and despair are equally prevented, and holy fear and Christian confidence are happily united.

Though all are not guilty of the same measure of positive or actual evil, yet all are by nature equally destitute of good; and as the law demands perfect obedience, even but one offence shuts for ever the door of justification by deeds of law. All mankind, therefore, are by nature excluded from the kingdom of Heaven. To infants, as well as adults, the gift of it is matter of pure Sovereign favour, and the bestowment of it on innumerable multitudes of the former, is an illustrious display of grace.

There is reason to think, that some have very unscriptural notions of the grace of God, for it is often spoken of, in a most vague and indefinite manner. They appear to think, that in order to maintain the important truth, that there is nothing in any of the human race that can furnish a motive to excite the Divine regard, it is necessary to maintain, that the love of God is altogether without reason—only, so it was, and so it must be. But the former by no means involves the latter. The Almighty has in every case, fit reasons for the displays of his goodness, though those reasons he does not always reveal, but simply informs us that he acts according to the pleasure of his own

will. This is a very different thing from a blind or an unaccountable caprice, which, instead of exalting his grace, would utterly debase it. Such a notion is quite incompatible with proper views of His wisdom and excellence, and even inconsistent with the feelings of gratitude and praise.

If the salvation of infants were pleaded for, on the ground of something meritorious in *them*, or even in the ground of what is called negative goodness, then there were just ground for objection; but on no such principle is the argument here rested. It is only pleaded, that the Scriptures have distinguished between those of the human race, who have sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, and those who have not,—that God, of his abundant goodness, has extended to the whole of the latter the blessings of redemption, and that He has commanded the gospel to be preached to the former, and has declared, that whosoever believeth it shall be saved, and whosoever believeth not shall be condemned. The distinction between relative and personal blame, is not introduced to show, that infants who are involved only in the former, have a *right* to salvation, but to show that there is an analogy between the way in which men came to be treated as sinners, and that in which they came to be treated as righteous, and to explain the principles of the present dispensation, both as an economy of moral government, and an economy of Sovereign goodness,—the former ac-

counting for the principle on which adults shall at last be judged, and the latter communicating grace to all who never were the subjects of the other. And if, for reasons worthy of himself, the Almighty has determined that all dying in infancy shall be saved, what is this dispensation but a part of the general plan of redemption, through unmerited and Sovereign favour? Never can a dispensation designed to illustrate His grace, be in the least inconsistent with that very attribute.

SECTION X.

IT is necessary now to advert to an objection which has been taken from the doctrine of election.

In the Scripture doctrine respecting the purposes of God, there is nothing which can in the least militate against what is now pleaded for, because it only follows, from the premises which have already been established, that all who die in infancy are included in the gracious purposes of Heaven, and are therefore chosen to salvation. There is no necessity, then, for saying more on the subject; but for the sake of farther elucidation, the following considerations are suggested.

The Scriptures, when they distinguish any from the chosen of God, invariably represent them as walking in the ways of sin, as shutting their eyes to the light, as hardening themselves against God, as left by Him to follow their own courses, and as abusing the longsuffering and goodness of God, to the hardening of their hearts in unbelief and impenitence. *a* Election, so far as it is a cause, is a

a Rom. ii. 4—6. ix. 22.

cause only of good, and not of evil ; it is not the proper cause why any perish. The only cause of men's perishing, is their not believing, or their disobedience. It is clear, from the views which have already been given of the Divine sovereignty, that it is the right which God possesses, to bestow good according to the good pleasure of His will, and that when he punishes, it is not in sovereignty, but as a Judge who is guided by law and by justice. A sovereign appointment to condemnation is therefore an utter contradiction, for it is as absurd to speak of sovereign justice as of equitable mercy. The same individual may be the subject of Sovereign goodness and of retributive justice, but even then the peculiar province of each is carefully preserved. The measure of suffering which is inflicted, must be traced to justice, and the portion of merited punishment which is not inflicted, is withheld by the hand of Sovereignty. Now, from what has been formerly stated, it appears, that whatever He in justice might have done, it is the fixed determination of God, that none of the human race shall be finally condemned by a judicial act of His will, arising simply from the offence of Adam. It follows, then, that all who die in infancy are chosen by Him in Christ, of his rich and his Sovereign grace.

It has been said, that God is represented as acting on the principle of selection, both among angels, and adults among mankind, and that there

fore the same principle must be acted on in regard to infants. But the conclusion does not follow from the premises, for angels, and also adults among mankind are *moral* agents, which infants as such are not, and therefore it does not follow that the treatment of the latter will be the same with that of the former. What has already been said on the difference between an economy of moral government, and a dispensation of Sovereign goodness, applies to the present question. Those beings who never were the subjects of the former, and who are yet capable of being objects of the latter, it is reasonable to conclude, will be treated in a way different from that in which the others are treated. Besides, why suppose that the principle of selection must be applied in one case because it has been so in another, particularly when the circumstances of the different classes present no such similarity as to warrant the conclusion, that their lot shall be regulated by a similar principle. The principle of selection, if applied to angels, appears in preserving some in "their first habitation," while others are permitted to fall from it; but when applied to mankind, it appears in making a distinction among those who *are* fallen. Now, such is the difference between these two things, that we cannot reason from the one when treating of the other. The purposes of God do not respect men as holy, but as fallen creatures. Had the former been the case, then they had been chosen to retain the holy and

happy eminence on which they stood, and not to be rescued from guilt and condemnation. The latter, however, is most clearly the doctrine of Scripture. It follows, then, that the goodness of God to the holy angels is not the counterpart of his goodness to fallen sinners, and therefore we cannot reason from the one, in order to illustrate the other. A purpose to preserve from sinning, does not imply the same thing as a purpose to save those who are considered as already in a state of sin and condemnation; and why then confound them? On the other hand, a determination to punish the whole of the fallen angels, and a determination to punish those of the human race who persist to the end in rebellion, are not exactly the same. Let the different dispensations of God rest each upon its own foundation, and let no desire for simplifying lead us to confound things which differ.

With regard to the difference which appears in the final condition of mankind, the distinction which the Scriptures make between relative and personal blame as applied to infants, and actual transgressors, is such, that it cannot be valid reasoning to argue, from the difference which appears among the latter, that a similar difference must exist among the former. It is evident that the condemnation even of the fallen angels did not rest on a merely arbitrary purpose, but upon their own actual rebellion; and that the final condemnation of the wicked of mankind will not turn upon any such

principle as a deed of exclusion; it will rest, as we have seen, on their own wilful disobedience, and particularly their rejection of the truth. But if infants, notwithstanding of the coming of Christ, are finally condemned, must not *their* sentence rest on such a deed of exclusion? Now, if no adult is to be condemned, merely because God has appointed him to perdition, or has not appointed him to salvation, it must be very unwarrantable to say, that infants shall be consigned to misery on grounds such as these.

It is not to be expected, that we shall ever be able in the present life, to explain the nature of the link which unites the purposes of God with the free actions of men. There *is* such a link, however, for the Scriptures always represent the Divine purposes as perfectly consistent with the free agency, and the consequent responsibility of mankind, and ascribe their ruin to their own iniquities. Every just view of the nature of God leads to the conclusion, that “known unto Him are all his works, from the beginning of the world;” and on the other hand, every just view of moral agency as necessarily leads to the conclusion, that men must be free, that is, without restraint in regard to good, or compulsion in regard to evil, for this kind of liberty is essentially necessary to their being accountable creatures. The Scriptures accordingly never represent the perfections or purposes of God, as in the least interfering with the dictates of duty, the connexion be-

tween the means and the end, or the voluntary nature of the actions of mankind. These views are in perfect accordance with the conviction which is universally felt, that we act voluntarily, and are therefore responsible agents—a conviction which is inseparable from the moral constitution of our nature. Now, it is on these principles that the characters of sinners will be ascertained, and their condition determined in the final day of retribution, and not upon the bare ground of the purposes of Heaven, irrespective of their spirit and conduct, as if their fate were the entire result of an arbitrary deed.

The application of these views to the subject in question is easily made, for as infants dying in infancy have never come the length of being moral and accountable agents, the link which connects and harmonises the purposes of God, and the free agency of man, can have no place in them. No voluntary moral actions have they ever done, no established connexion between means and ends have they ever disregarded, and no kind of revelation from heaven, have they neglected or scorned. Does it not follow, then, that if they are to be condemned, it cannot be on the same ground with that on which others shall, but in consequence of a purpose quite different from the *other* purposes of God. And if the Almighty has informed us that on the ground of personal offences, and not on that of his purpose to punish for the sin of Adam, men

are finally to be doomed to misery, why apply to infants a rule which is at utter variance with this? The question is not what God *might* in righteousness have done, for certainly he might have left infants to the consequences of the fall; it is a question regarding a matter of fact, and is simply, "What has God intimated that he *will* do, in regard to such?" And certainly the fair conclusion is, that as the declared rule of judgment does not apply to them, they are included in the gracious purposes of Heaven, and so chosen to salvation.

In the very nature of the thing, this choice must be of Sovereign grace, for what claim can they have any more than adults, to the bliss of the celestial kingdom. The number who shall thus participate in this grace, does not in the smallest interfere with its freeness. So far from this, the great number who partake of it serves to exalt it. Did it not appear as illustriously when the gospel was embraced by multitudes, as when a few only received it. To suppose the contrary, were to betray the most erroneous views of its nature.

It is evident, that the Jews who were broken off because of unbelief, are represented as left to act according to the impressions received from surrounding objects, and so to the hardening influence of their own evil hearts. Now, it is only in thus leaving men to follow their own counsels, that God marks a difference between one and another of the human race. The vessels of mercy are "afore

prepared," by the positive efficiency of Sovereign grace for the heavenly glory, but God is infinitely far from being the author of sin, though He be the author of all that is good. The vessels of wrath *fit themselves* for destruction, by rejecting the counsel of God, stumbling at the doctrine of the cross, and refusing to submit to the Divine plan of justification. *a*

But if any of those who die in infancy are not chosen of God to salvation, to what are *they* left by Him? Is it to the impenitence and hardening influence of their hearts? No, for they are removed before they are capable of actual sin, and of course, while incapable of despising his goodness, or taking occasion from it, to harden their hearts against Him. Is it to the consequences of Adam's sin? No, for they shall rise again. Is it to the sufferings and penalties entailed by sin upon this evil world? No, for God has in mercy removed them from it. *b* Say, then, are not all who die in infancy chosen to inherit everlasting life through the grace of God, flowing through the atonement of Christ?

The reasoning of Paul, in the 9th chapter of his epistle to the Romans, respecting Jacob and Esau, has been explained by some, as if it were incompatible with the general salvation of such;

a Rom. ix. 32, 33. . . x. 3, and xi. 20.

b Eclectic Review, Vol. xviii. p. 221.

but no such thing is there taught, as that any infants shall finally perish.

The apostle is proving, that as the temporal inheritance, which was a figure of the heavenly, did not go by birth, but as Jehovah pleased, so the spiritual blessings of the kingdom of Christ, are not to be considered as coming by birth, as the Jews erroneously supposed, but by the choice of God, that is, by free favour, and of course to Jews and Gentiles, on the same ground without difference, as he teaches in chap. iii. 22, 23, 24 and x. 12. His reasoning respects the facts, in the history of Jacob and Esau, and also in that of Isaac and Ishmael, as illustrative of the right which God exercised in choosing whomsoever he pleased, to be employed in the accomplishment of His purposes, connected with the birth of the Saviour, and as throwing light on the unrestricted nature of that grace, which communicates the blessings of redemption. But this does not by any means determine the everlasting condition of the individuals introduced. It is not the manner of God to reveal to the world, or to relatives, the final condition of individuals, till their actions and character do so; and this method is attended with many practical and beneficial results.

Besides, the declaration of Heaven respecting the pre-eminence to which Jacob was to rise, though made while he was an infant in the womb, did not respect *him as an infant*, but rather what he

should be in manhood, and as the head of the people from whom the Messiah should descend, and what they should be as a body; and in like manner the declaration respecting Esau, though made before he was born, did not respect him as an infant, but what he should be long afterwards, and what place should be occupied by the people which should spring from him in their collective capacity. Neither Jacob nor Esau died in infancy, and therefore the passage is wrested, when applied to those who die in that state. If it be said, that as they were infants before they became adults, therefore that which respects them in the latter state, may respect them in the former; it is sufficient to say in reply, that it might as well be said, that infants are *men*; because all men are infants before they reach manhood, or that all infants are labourers, because labourers are infants before they become adults. The absurdity of such reasoning is evident at first sight, and the application to the subject in question, is easily made. Why, then, apply to mere infants, what is descriptive of the lot of adults, and of adults too, who are considered more as the heads of collective bodies than as individuals.

Besides, such were the arrangements of God in regard to the temporal inheritance, and such the ends for which it was given, that only one could obtain it. One only could be the head of that peculiar people of whom Messiah was to spring, so

that if the inheritance in question were obtained by Isaac, Ishmael could not partake of it, and if Jacob got it, Esau could not. The purpose of God, according to election of which, the apostle is speaking is, that "The elder should serve the younger." Had the case been reversed, still one only could have got the privilege in question, for the nation from which the Messiah was to spring, was to have the pre-eminence. But the exclusion of these two from the privileges in question, did not of itself necessarily involve their exclusion from the heavenly inheritance. *It* is not limited as was the other, but may be enjoyed by countless multitudes, even by all who choose to seek it by faith in the Gospel. As numbers whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, obtained, through faith in the promised Messiah, a place in the kingdom of heaven, so might Ishmael and Esau obtain the blessings of eternal redemption. The Scriptures do not warrant us to say, that they died impenitent. Ishmael, it is true, was a persecutor, but so was Saul of Tarsus. Besides, even granting that he finally perished, his case will not apply to deceased infants; for *they* were not left of God to be persecutors, and what is said of him, respects him not as an infant, but as a man.

It is said, indeed, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," but in Scripture, when one is said to be loved, and another hated, the meaning is simply, that the former is more loved than the

latter, and not that the latter is absolutely hated. *a* Accordingly, the passages in Gen. xxv. 23, Mal. i. 2, 3, refer to the different lot assigned to the descendants of Jacob and Esau respectively. *b*

But passing this, and granting that Esau finally perished, still his case would not be parallel with the case of infants. Even on this supposition, he was left to the ways of his own will, and to the choice of his evil heart, but to no such thing are infants dying in infancy left. On the contrary, they are removed from all danger of thus sinning to their ruin. In a word, take which of the views we may, the argument drawn from this history against the salvation of all who die in infancy, is utterly unfounded.—Does it not follow, that all such are of “the election of grace,” and what can even the most rigid hyper-Calvinist, find in fairness, objectionable in this, even on his own principles.

To the doctrines of scripture, it becomes us implicitly to bow, but let not men use language which the scriptures never employ, and which is abhorrent alike to the principles of the gospel, and the dictates of humanity, and then charge those who object to it, as hostile to the grace of God. By such language, a prejudice has been excited in different quarters, against several of the most important branches of the evangelical system—an evil certainly

a Luke xiv. 26. John xii. 25. *b* Doddridge on Rom. ix. 12, 13.

of no small magnitude. There is very little encouragement to reason with such, but there are many who feel difficulties on the subject, who are far from any approaches to the spirit I now refer to, and who earnestly wish to get rid of those difficulties could they find their way clear. Let such candidly examine the Scriptures, and beware of being misled by the confident tone of persons, who, while they boast of their soundness in the faith, betray a temper which is in direct opposition to the truth. It is strange, but, alas! too true, that the very essence of self-righteous complacency, is sometimes found in connexion with high pretensions of regard for the doctrine of grace.

Though the great question is, "What saith the Scriptures?" and not, What saith this or the other Reformer? yet, as names are sometimes used as the means of reproaching the innocent, and misleading the unwary, and the uninformed, it may be proper to state, that there is nothing in the great peculiarities of the system commonly called moderate Calvinism, which is in the least incompatible with the salvation of infants. On the contrary, that system, as now held by its enlightened advocates, furnishes the most tenable and satisfactory grounds for the pleasing persuasion, that all who die without personal transgression, are written in the Lamb's book of life. Accordingly, very many of its most *decided friends* have avowed their conviction of this, in relation to all dying in infancy. And even some of

the very highest, if not even hyper-Calvinists, have expressed themselves favourably in regard to it.— This, for instance, has been done by Dr. Gill, who says, “that many unguarded expressions have been dropped, concerning the punishment of such, which are not at all to the credit of truth.” *a* Mr Toplady has given an explanation of our Lord’s admonition in Matt. xviii. 10, which (supposing it to be just) affords a direct proof of the sentiment in question. “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.” He understands by their angels, “the souls of such children as die in their infancy,” who, upon their bodies being previously “dislodged by death, do always behold the face of God who is in heaven.” *b* Now, whatever may be thought of this interpretation of the passage or of the word *angel*, in this connexion, (which some think is supported by Acts xii 15,) it will be allowed, that the salvation of infants was not considered by this writer as inconsistent even with the high views which he connected with the doctrine of election, and in the defence of which he was so active and zealous. It may be added, that the opposite sentiment has not been exclusively held by persons of one school of

a Eody of Divinity, Vol. ii. page 543.

b Historic proof of the Calvinism of the Church of England.
Introduct. page 78.

Theology, for not a few Anti-Calvinists have held, that a great proportion of those who die in infancy, are at least excluded from the benefits of redemption. The question of course is, On what grounds do the respective advocates of these different views rest their particular sentiments? That some maintain the universal salvation of deceased infants on unscriptural grounds is true, but is this a reason for charging all who hold the sentiment with those errors, in the face of evidence sufficient to satisfy every candid mind, that they rest it on grounds altogether different. In a word, let candour be exercised, and never let those be blamed as inimical to a particular system, who may be unwilling to admit some unjust and exceptionable inferences, which have been rashly drawn from it, because they appear to them injurious excrescences, that deform and weaken its strength.

SECTION XI.

It has been objected, that the universal salvation of children who die in infancy, is inconsistent with the peculiar promises concerning the children of believers.

There is a mistake in this objection, in regard to the promises which peculiarly respect the families of Christians. Those promises do not peculiarly respect their infant children *as infants*, or as beings who are not accountable agents, but rather apply to them chiefly considered as moral agents, or when they come of age to be profited by the means of instruction and example. Christian parents are encouraged to prayer in the behalf of their offspring, and to diligence in the use of the means of grace with them, by the promise, that their labour shall not be altogether in vain. *a* They are warranted by the word of the God of truth, to expect, that if they themselves live by the faith of the Son of God, if they faithfully discharge all parental duties, and if they continue in the devout instruction of their families, and seek to exemplify before them the na-

a Psalm lxxviii. 5—8. 2 Tim. i. 5. iii. 15. 2 John iv.

ture and tendency of the gospel in holy tempers, and in the fruits of righteousness, then the Divine blessing will more or less ultimately give success to their endeavours. *a* “I know Abraham,” says God, “that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham the thing which he hath spoken of him.” *b* It was, then, by Abraham’s behaviour towards his family, that the Lord raised up among them a seed to serve Him. And in like manner, it was by believing Israelites in after times, teaching the things of God to their children in successive generations, that “they were led to set their hope in God.” Only take heed to thyself,” said he to Israel, “lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen,—but teach them, thy sons and thy son’s sons, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children. *c* Now, it is evident that such promises and precepts chiefly respect such as are capable of receiving instruction and of yielding to its influence. There is therefore nothing in them which can militate against the salvation of all who die in infancy, from whomsoever they may descend.

I do not mean by this, that the promises con-

a Prov. xxii. 16. *b* Gen. xviii. 19.

c Deut. iv. 9, 10. and vii. 9. xi. 18, 19.

cerning the families of Christians, do not at all refer to their infant children as such. They certainly include an assurance to believers, of the salvation of their infant seed, should they die in that state. But it does not follow from this, that no others will be saved, or that all others shall not. There are no promises of spiritual blessings made in scripture to unbelievers *as such*, and of course there can be no promises made them concerning their seed. But as the fact that many of the common benefits of life, which are matters of promise to believers, while they are not in the same way promised to unbelievers, is quite consistent with the fact, that the latter receive them as well as the former, so also the promises in question, are quite consistent with the universal salvation of the children of the latter. Such promises are of use to believers, but if the promises of the *gospel itself* are disregarded, it is evident that promises respecting their seed will not profit the ungodly.

It surely cannot be necessary, in order to settle the minds of believers regarding the salvation of their infant seed, that all or even the greater part of other infants, should, on leaving this world, be shut out from the blessing. When God promised to give to Israel a land flowing with milk and honey, and promised to bless it with peculiar fertility, he did not by this dispensation abandon all care of the Gentiles, for to the latter he continued "to do good; he gave them rain from heaven,—and

fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness." This example establishes a general principle, namely, that particular promises made to a certain body, do not in every case exclude all others from every thing thus promised. Whatever particular advantages were granted the Jews, in order to answer the designs of Providence in relation to the world, the Gentiles were "not left without witness" of the care and the goodness of God.

In like manner the promises in question, so far as they include the dying infants of Christians, can only show, that besides the general grounds of hope for the salvation of all dying in infancy, there are some additional ones in favour of the families of believers.

In so far as the promises comprehend the infant seed of believers, they by no means involve the idea, that the grace of God and the spiritual blessings of the kingdom of Christ are imparted by fleshly birth, for they may be considered as just confirming and applying to Christians in particular, for their comfort and encouragement, the general purposes of grace, in regard to all who die in a state of infancy. Considered, on the other hand, as referring to their children as moral agents, or as come of age to be profited by instruction, and such like religious advantages, there can be nothing in them inconsistent with the free operation of the grace of Heaven; "because this grace in its various blessings, being conveyed to sin-

ners *by means*, it is quite according to the natural order of things, that it should accompany those means and flow with them, as it were in the same channel." *a* In this way Jehovah appears as the God of his people in successive generations.

Circumcision has been introduced in relation to this subject, but that institution was not a seal of the personal salvation of those on whom it was performed, but of the *general truth*, that justification could only be had through the work of the Messiah, and that it would be obtained by every individual of mankind who believed in Him. It was not merely a seal, that the blessings of which it was a sign, should be obtained by all of the circumcised, who believed as Abraham had done; for though it was administered only to his seed, and to those Gentiles who were in his family, or connected with the Israelitish commonwealth, it was a seal of the general truth, that *every* individual of mankind who believed in the Messiah, the uncircumcised as well as the circumcised, should be justified as the Patriarch had been, while *he* was uncircumcised. *b* As a sign, it was a means of instruction, and hence it was administered to those respecting whom there was a moral certainty, that they would be instructed in its import, or in the truth of which it was a seal. It was therefore designed to confirm a general truth, and is fitly called a

a Wardlaw on the Abrahamic Covenant.

b Rom. iv. 9—12 ii. 25—29,

seal of the righteousness, or the justification by faith, of the uncircumcised as well as of the circumcised.

Now, when *faith* and justification are connected, the reference is exclusively to adults, who are capable of believing. But we have already seen, that "It is of faith that it might be of grace," and that this is illustrated by the salvation of infants, without believing.

If, then, the spiritual blessings, of which circumcision was a sign, were communicated to uncircumcised believers, before, as well as after the coming of Christ, would they not also be imparted to uncircumcised infants who died in infancy. The former, when connected with what has already been seen, seems clearly to involve the latter.

Circumcision, then, was one of the external means of grace, which were granted to Israel, the chief of which was the enjoyment of the oracles of God. Now, the actual benefit derived from external means, arises from the improvement which is made of them; and as the import of circumcision was a matter of after instruction to those who received it in infancy, the ultimate spiritual advantage derived from it, would arise from their reception when they grew up, of the great truths of which it was a seal. "Circumcision verily profiteth," says Paul, "if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." Thus, though the

families of the Jews had advantages, in regard to the means of instruction, which those of the Gentiles in general had not, yet the latter, if they received the truth, however faintly it might be revealed to them, were not by their circumstances excluded from salvation. If in itself, then, this institution did not determine the actual state of its subjects, no argument can be drawn from it against the salvation of those infants who never received it. At the same time as its administration to children, signified that even in childhood they were *capable* subjects of salvation, it would lead the believing parent to pray for his child, and if it died in infancy, to rejoice in the grace which embraced his offspring as well as himself, while, if an enlightened character, it would gladden his heart to think of the gracious aspect which the institution bore towards *all* children dying at the same time of life. The Israelites were happy in anticipating the future conversion of the Gentiles, and even in the salvation of many of them at the very time, through the knowledge of the true God, though not circumcised, or in any way connected with the commonwealth of Israel, for of the salvation even of *such*, circumcision was a seal.—And on the same principle would an intelligent Jewish parent feel, in regard to Gentile infants dying in infancy.

If it be said, that this view of the subject is calculated to make parents careless as to their children, while in a state of non-age, it may be replied,

that the inference is unfounded, because, though till they reach a certain age, children cannot understand or believe, yet it is of the first importance for parents so to train them, *before* they reach that age, as to accustom them to habits of order, attention, and obedience, as a means of furthering the understanding and reception of the truth, when their faculties are enlarged, and begin to unfold themselves. Before they can comprehend any thing about God, they may be taught to know that they ought to obey their parents, what it is to offend them,—what it is to be punished for a fault, and what it is to be pardoned, and even what it is to be pardoned through the intercession of another. Now, as the Gospel meets such ideas, this instruction will tend to enable them to understand it, when it speaks of a heavenly Father, of obedience and sin, of punishment and forgiveness, and of the work and mediation of Christ. This preparatory discipline must be considered as included in the precepts, which have just been quoted. If it be said, that the belief of the universal salvation of infants, may tend to cause parents to be the less fervent in prayer for their infant children, it is sufficient to say in reply, that of the time of the departure of their children, parents are generally ignorant—that prayer should be offered up for a blessing on the preparatory discipline, of which I have just been speaking, that if it shall please the Lord to spare

them, they may soon be brought to the knowledge and faith of the Gospel; and that as we know not how soon the Lord may be pleased to renovate even the heart of an infant, it is for us to implore His gracious influence in the behalf of their souls, that whether they live or die they may be the Lord's. No one surely can for a moment suppose, that the promise of a blessing on the religious advantages enjoyed by the advancing children of pious parents, excludes from the hope of mercy those young people whose parents are irreligious, and who have not the privilege of the instructions and example, and the fervent prayers of a devout parentage. Were it so, how could the Church of God ever extend beyond the precincts of the families of those who are already connected with it? Blessed be God that in his abundant grace he often brings young people to the knowledge and faith of the Gospel, who, so far from enjoying the advantages of a pious family, have been brought up in the midst of carelessness, folly, and sin !

Now, if the promises of a blessing on the use of means with the advancing children of religious parents, do not exclude from the hope of salvation, the *grown up* young people of families who have no such advantages, will it be argued that the ground on which we are assured of the salvation of the departed infants of Christians, affords no hope concerning the *infants* of others? If it be said, that

those of the advanced children of unbelievers who are saved, are such as believe the Gospel, it may be replied, that as faith itself is not the ground of acceptance, there is nothing in the gift of eternal life to the infants of such, without faith, which is at all inconsistent with the plan of redemption ; for it is a manifestation of the same grace which appears in leading any such adults to believe, and thus saving their souls.—On the contrary, the denial of the salvation of such infants, seems to proceed on the principle, that faith is somehow the ground of acceptance, and so tends to darken the doctrine of the grace of God. On no just principle, therefore, can we grant that the former are saved, without granting that the latter may be so. Was not Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, for instance, a partaker of the grace of God, while yet but a child ? And was not Josiah the son of Amon a partaker of it too at a very early period ? *a*

I shall again advert to the objection, that to maintain the certainty of the salvation of all who die in infancy, is calculated to induce parents to be less fervent in prayer for their children while in that state, or when they are apparently dying in it, because they will conclude, that in such circumstances there is little or no call for supplications in their behalf. In addition to what has already been said, in reply to this objection, it remains to be ob-

a 1 Kings xiv. 13. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 1, 2.

served, that it proceeds upon the principle that some, even of the infants of Christian parents, may eternally perish, for otherwise there could be no uncertainty on the subject. If, again, there be no uncertainty in regard to the salvation of the dying infants of believing parents, then the objection is as strong against this view of the subject, as against that which is now pleaded for. It follows, then, that those who make this objection, so far from considering the promises respecting the children of believers, as including the certain salvation of all of them who die in infancy, actually think that a great degree of uncertainty hangs upon the subject. Now, do any who take this view of the subject, feel the smallest scruple as to the propriety of praying for the salvation of the dying infants of unbelievers? And if they do not, they of course allow that at least some of the infants of such may be saved, for if they do not believe this, why do they pray for them any more than for fallen angels? On this principle they ought only to pray for the conversion of the parents, and not in the first instance, in behalf of the children.

It is to be hoped, however, that none will say, that it is sinful to pray for such children, and that no Christian will fail to pray that they may be saved. Indeed, it is generally allowed, even by those who hesitate as to the salvation of all infants, that some of the infants, even of unbelievers, shall be saved.

If, then, the objectors in question allow that *some* of the infant children of unbelievers may be saved, what is this but saying of *them* what they say of the infant children of believers, for the objection supposes that all, even of *such*, are not to be saved. Is not this completely to give up the point? Does it not place the infant children of believers and unbelievers as much on a par, as does their indiscriminate salvation. In vain, therefore, is any objection on this ground brought against the sentiment now pleaded for. If again it be said, that there is a certainty of the salvation of the infants of believers, but not of other infants, then, as has been hinted, the objection is as applicable to Christian prayer, in regard to the former, as it is on the principle, that *all* infants are saved.

This objection supposes, too, that such parents deem it needless, if not absurd, to pray for that of which we have a promise, or of the accomplishment of which we are certain. But will any pious and rightly informed parent reason in this way? David had a promise made him, that his house and kingdom should be established for ever, and yet no sooner did he hear it, than we find him praying that it might be accomplished. "And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said." *a*

After making many promises to his people, God says, "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." *a* When Daniel knew that the time of deliverance from Babylon was at hand, he became the more earnest in prayer for it. *b* Are not Christians assured that the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, and does not this assurance encourage and stimulate to prayer, instead of causing them to relax in it? And will not the assurance that their infant offspring, when taken hence, are removed to the heavenly paradise, call forth the aspirations of a devout and a thankful heart. Will it not lead parents to devote them to the God of all grace, and the Father of mercies. And when they sit by the death-bed of their departing infants, will not this confidence endear to them the cross and resurrection of the heavenly Adam; will it not enlarge their views of the exuberant grace of God, of the glory of the work of Christ and of the preciousness and suitableness of the hope of the gospel; and will it not attract their hearts towards the God of all consolation, whose glorious perfections are employed in bringing good out of evil, and in making all things to work together for the present and the future bless-

a Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

b Dan. ix. 2, 3.

edness of his people. And can views and feelings such as these cause to restrain prayer before God? Far, very far from it.

That the Scriptures say more respecting the children of pious parents, than those of others, and that particular promises are made regarding them, may be accounted for, by the following considerations:—

First.—Pious parents alone can properly value the blessing, and it is therefore reasonable to expect, that less will be said in relation to others. Since God often bereaves his people of their children, it is to be expected, that he will afford them that consolation, which to them is peculiarly delightful.

Secondly.—The design of Scripture, is to exhibit the church of God chiefly as it appears in this world, and therefore, little comparatively is said of the children of those who are in no way connected with it. The general declarations respecting the universality of death, in consequence of Adam's sin, and the resurrection as the fruit of the work of Christ, are of themselves quite sufficient. *Thirdly.*

—The Scriptures dwell on the circumstances of pious families, because such enjoy the means of salvation, and because it is their object, as we have seen, to encourage parents in the faithful and diligent use of them, by representing the Divine blessing as descending from generation to generation, where they are enjoyed and improved. *a* What more

a Psalm lxxviii. 5, 6, 7.

natural than this, when we consider that God worketh by means adapted to the end. There is nothing, therefore, in this that militates against the universal salvation of infants dying in infancy.

This is confirmed by the fact, that God has in several instances expressed his regard for children, irrespective of the piety of their parents, and even for the children of rebellious idolaters, as, for example, in Isaiah lvii. 5. Ezek. xvi. 20, 21. In the latter of these passages, He calls the children *His*, because in giving them to their parents, he still retained his right to them, so that in putting them to death, there was robbery as well as cruelty exercised. But the regard expressed for them, implies more than what arises simply from their being his property, as the Creator. It is allowed by Mr Boston, that “These *might* be God’s children, as being heirs of God and the kingdom of heaven, though thus barbarously slain by their parents.” ^a Setting aside this passage, then the general principle, that the infants of the ungodly may at death enter the kingdom of heaven, is distinctly admitted by him, so that in his view, there is nothing in the thing itself, that is inconsistent with Scripture. In Jeremiah xix. 3—6, God associates the injuries inflicted on infants, who were burned in sacrifice to Baal, with the base and daring affronts offered to himself, by the worship of the idol. “And al-

^a Miscellaneous Questions, Quest. vi.

though occasion too often occurred, for expressing indignation at the latter, it seems as if so monstrous a crime were capable of grievous aggravation from the former ; hence, we rarely, if ever, find idolatry itself denounced in terms so adapted to thrill through the heart, and fill it with horrific apprehensions. Compassion for injured infants, goads on the flashes of celestial wrath, and mercy towards them, redoubles the thunder of holy indignation. Can it then be supposed, that He who in language so tremendous, undertook to avenge their temporal injuries, was at the same time intending to destroy them for ever !” *a*

The sentiment which restricts salvation to the departed infants of believers, involves the notion that the infants of unbelievers are punished, not only on account of the sin of Adam, but also because of the sins of their immediate parents. If it be said, that such are not punished for the sins of their parents, but are only in consequence of them, left to suffer the evils to which they are exposed as descendants of Adam, it may be said in reply, that in regard to the season and measure of mere temporal calamities, this is quite admissible ; for the whole temporal consequences of the sin of Adam, are by no means removed, and in regard to these one event, happeneth to the righteous

a Dr Harris’ Essay, page 89.

and to the wicked among adults, and not a little of them falls to the lot of children. But when applied to the everlasting condition of such, it is in direct opposition to the Scripture representation of the connexion between the mediation of Christ, and their resurrection from the dead ; and also to the view there given of the nature and rule of the final judgment. The former, we have seen, involves the salvation of all departed infants, and as the latter will proceed on the ground of personal deeds, the same conclusion is thereby established, because, in regard to personal moral deeds and individual accountability, *all* infants are upon a level, whether descended from believers or unbelievers.

No principle can be just, which would do away the distinction so carefully preserved in the Scriptures, between Adam and ordinary ancestors. It is true, that there is a connexion between the behaviour of christian parents, and the character of their offspring, because there is a connexion established between the fulfilment of the promises of God, and the attention of his people, to the use of appointed means, with their children. "To expect the one without the other, is not trust in God, but unwarrantable presumption." It is reasonable to conclude, that where appropriate means are employed, there the blessing of Heaven will descend, to give them effect. But we are speaking of mere infants who are not the subjects of such means. For them indeed, prayer may, and

ought to be offered up, but this is a different thing from using means *with* them. The assurance that when such die, they enter into life, will not, as we have seen, lead to restrain prayer in their behalf. Christians know, that the promises of God do not operate as encouragements to indolence, but as incentives to activity, and that in like manner, they excite to prayer, rather than make indifferent in regard to it. But there is nothing in this, that makes the eternity of an infant, entirely to turn on the behaviour of a parent.

Is it not the doctrine of Scripture, that Adam ceased to be a public head as soon as he sinned? The fate of his offspring was not connected with his *after* conduct, whether good or evil, as it had been while he sustained a public character. But if the everlasting fate of mere infants is made to depend on the conduct of their immediate parents, is not this to establish a multitude of public heads, so far resembling Adam, as at least to weaken what the scriptures say of the peculiarity of his public character?

It is true, as has just been stated, that there is a connexion between the state of children and the behaviour of their parents; and this appears in irreligious as well as pious families, because if parents neglect their duty, children often grow up and die in a course of transgression. But to this, the words of God to Ezekiel fully apply, "If thou dost not speak, to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked

man shall die *in his iniquity*, but his blood will I require at thine hand. *a* On this principle, the unfaithful parent will be held answerable for the blood of his child, but yet that child shall die in his *own* iniquity, because he will be judged according to the light which he had, or might have had, if he had used the means, which were in his power. But this has no relation to the departed infants of such parents, for it is assumed in the whole of this reasoning, that such were never moral or accountable agents, and had not their faculties sufficiently developed to be capable of actual sin, whether in voluntarily following a bad example, or in rejecting the means of knowledge, which might be around them. There is nothing, therefore, in such cases, of the same nature with the relation of the human race, to their public head Adam.

I shall here introduce a remark or two, in relation to baptism, because objections in regard to the subject in question, are sometimes taken from it.

The notion, that regeneration, or final salvation is necessarily connected with this institution, is at utter variance with Scripture. The institutions of Heaven, are but signs of spiritual things, and do not in themselves seal the salvation of any who partake of them. *b* Baptism is a sign of the saving truth, and of that change which is necessary to

a Ezek. xxxiii. 8. *b* I Peter iii. 21. Acts viii 13. 22, 23.

the enjoyment of its blessings. It is not a token, that the individual to whom it is administered, whether young or old, is himself a partaker of those blessings, though it is a token, that in his present state, he is *capable* of receiving them. It is, in particular, a sensible illustration of the need which its subjects have of those blessings of which it is a sign, and of the means by which they have been provided of God, and is of course, designed to be an illustration of the gospel, for the purpose of instruction. It is therefore a sign of those truths in which all are concerned, and ought to be instructed, and is to be administered to those respecting whom there is a moral certainty, that they will actually in due time be instructed in them. Being, as the ancient token was, a sign of the general truth, that salvation is to be obtained only through faith in Christ, and of that purification or change which is necessary to the enjoyment of the blessing, and being, like it too, a rite in which the subject is passive, it is, like it, applied to them as matter for future contemplation. It is thus a means of instructing by signs, which at once assists the parent and the public teacher in their teaching, and those who are taught, in understanding what they are instructed in.

This institution, therefore, has a particular respect to the work of future instruction, and is a means of aiding in it, and it is as a sensible illustration of the truth, that adults themselves profit

by reflecting on it. Since, then, it does not determine the actual state of its subjects, no argument can be drawn from it against the salvation of those who never received it. One of the errors of Antichrist, abjured by the Scots Reformers, was his cruel sentence against children dying without it. It is of great importance to give every institution its proper place, without elevating it too high on the one hand, or underrating it on the other. But as it is not meant to say more on this subject than the present question seemed to require, I pursue it no farther.

It may be added, that the salvation of infants descended from ungodly parents, serves in some measure to account for much of the kindness and long-suffering which are often exercised towards the enemies of God. For the sake of their children, benefits may frequently be granted to the irreligious, as the tares are spared for the sake of the wheat. The eye of God is upon more than the present generation, and for the sake of those who are yet unborn, the lot of the present race may often be regulated. Not only is an ungodly character spared that he may have space for repentance—he may have a child, or children, for whose sake he is prospered.

Let Christian parents be attentive to the duty of “bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” The language of God to every Christian parent, is that of Pharaoh’s daugh-

ter to the mother of Moses, "Take this child and nurse it for me." Let not this sacred obligation be forgotten. Let parents fervently pray for their offspring, and labour to impress at an early period on their hearts, the unutterable importance of unseen and eternal things. Let them commend them to Him who folded children in his arms, and blessed them. What are temporal advantages, when they expose to the snares and the dangers of this evil world? What are worldly accomplishments when compared with the blessing of "seeing our children walking in the truth?" Let our language to them be,—

Dear cherish'd babes, if you should have

To travel far alone,

And weep by turns at many a grave,

Before you reach your own;

May He who bade you weep, be nigh

To wipe away your tears,

And point you to a world on high

Beyond these mournful years.

Yet, if it be His holy will,

I pray that, hand in hand

We all may travel many a hill

Of this the pilgrim's land,

With Zion's shining gate in view,

Through every danger rise,

AND FORM A FAMILY ANEW,

UNBROKEN IN THE SKIES.

SECTION XII.

THE preceding reflections appear decidedly to show, that the question respecting the salvation of infants ought not to be shunned as an intrusion into "those secret things which belong only to God." It seems to be an evident conclusion, from every view which the Scriptures exhibit of the will of the Almighty, that all of them dying in infancy are saved.

Bereaved parents may therefore console themselves with the exquisitely pleasing consideration, that their departed infants have gone to "a better, even the heavenly country." And must it not endear the Scriptures to a Christian, that while they exhibit to himself the way of peace, they also direct his views to the celestial world as the place whether the objects of his tenderest affections have gone, and where he expects to join them when the days of his sojourning on earth shall be ended. How gratifying the thought, of having as it were a part of ourselves in the kingdom of God ! "When these tenderest of ties bind too strongly to the earth, our merciful Father loosens them, and fastens the knot nearer to Himself; and surely we have much more need of ties to heaven than of ties to earth. Although the chief reason why our affec-

What should be above is, that there Jesus sitteth at the right hand of God, yet this surely is not at all inconsistent with our feeling the influence of *subordinate ties*. The pleasure which David experienced was not sinful, when he comforted himself with the thought, "I shall go to him, although he shall not return to me." Shall we then soon follow our departed offspring, and has not this a tendency to moderate our grief? Does it not remind us of the vanity of life? If this world were our final, or even our long home, we might be justified in feeling a deeper interest in its things; but we are here only for a day, and is it not our chief concern rather to be diligent, to be found of the Saviour in peace, than inconsolably to bewail the departure of others? Hear a Christian say after burying his child, "And now one of our family is gone to take possession of the sepulchre in all our names. Ere long I shall lie down with my child.—It is a warning of Providence, that these concluding days of my life may be more regular, more spiritual, more useful than the former."

Parents are apt, when their children are taken away, and particularly when breach follows upon breach, to think with Jacob, that nothing remains for them, "but to go mourning to the grave, because they are not." The trial doubtless is heavy, but let us think of Job, in whom deep parental feeling and ardent piety were strikingly blended, and like him, let us bow to the will of

God, "who gave and who hath taken away," and say from the heart, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." "The hope of their being transplanted into a more salutary clime, there to rebloom in everlasting vigour, and the reflection, that if they had been spared, they had been unavoidably exposed to innumerable temptations, from which, if our lives were spared, we should yet be unable to screen them, ought to settle our minds."

Yes, there is a pleasure in seeing them safe before us, instead of leaving them exposed to temptation and sin. How different the feelings of a parent bereaved of his infants, from those of Aaron, when Nadab and Abihu fell in the act of rebellion, and from those of Eli, when his sons fell "in one day," as an express token of the Divine displeasure! They lost their children in circumstances the most distressing, and yet they bowed with profound submission to the will of Heaven. But he who removed our infants, has seemed to say, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter; patiently suffer this little one to come unto me, for of such is my kingdom composed. 'Verily, I say unto you, their angels do always behold the face of my Father.' 'If I take away your child, I take it away to myself.' Is not this infinitely beyond any thing you could do for it? Could you say to it, if it had lived, thou shalt 'weep no more, the days of thy mourning are ended.' Could you show it any thing in this world like the glory of

God, and of the Lamb?" Could you raise it to any honour here like "receiving a crown of life." *a*

If it has seemed meet to God, that the allotted threescore years and ten, should be spent rather in heaven than on earth, is there any reason for inconsolable anguish? Our departed infants have attained the end of their creation, so that there is no reason for saying, "Why were they brought forth for the tomb?" How animating the thought, that those powers which were but beginning to unfold themselves, are now expanding, and employed amid the glories of the heavenly paradise. Whether they were spared for a season, and multiplied attractions and endearments, or were cut off from the womb, and had the allotment which Job so passionately wished had been his, the same end has been answered. Their short-lived existence on earth, may appear as a kind of blank, but God does nothing in vain. Their life below, short as it was, has served to introduce the eternal state, as well as the life of the hoary headed Patriarch. At the same time, their death by its effects will impress a character on the eternity of surviving witnesses, relatives and friends. Let bereaved parents then say, "It is well with the child." "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth good in his sight." He who wept at the grave of Lazarus, hath hallowed the tears of affection, but he forbids

a Cecil's Friendly Visit to the House of Mourning.

us to sorrow, as if there were no hope. While you weep as nature feels, and indeed ought to feel, for otherwise the providence could not profit you, beware of nursing melancholy, and cherishing a morbid sensibility. May not the child say to you, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I have got home to my Father." If the hope of going to the Saviour animates your heart, is not the thought, that the happy spirit will never "return to you" in this evil world, likewise fraught with consolation? "Staying only to wash away its native impurity in the laver of regeneration, it bade a speedy adieu to time and terrestrial things—just looked on the light, and then withdrew into the more inviting regions of undisturbed repose.—Happy voyager! no sooner launched, than arrived at the haven." *a*

It is the Gospel alone, which can enlighten the shades of the valley of death, open a delightful prospect beyond the desolations of the grave, and mark out the path to glory, honour and immortality. No real alleviation of grief can be had, but in the character of the Man of Sorrows, who now liveth as the only mediator between God and men, and who from cordial sympathy can speak to the heart, and by his grace can heal its deepest and most painful wounds.

It is delightful to repose on Him, who can enter into our every feeling, can effectually succour us in

a Hervey's Meditations, page 14.

the day of trial, and with power can say, "Weep not, the child is not dead but sleepeth." "I am the resurrection and the life." "O thou afflicted and tossed with the tempest; when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee."

While the Christian parent is consoled by the thought, that his departed children have been washed in the blood of the Lamb; he rejoices also in the faith, that the same blood can cleanse away all his *own* manifold and aggravated sins. Are not *irreligious* parents, then, solemnly admonished by what is said of their deceased infant offspring, to seek deliverance through the same atonement and resurrection, which have opened to the latter the kingdom of heaven. What a mercy, if the death of the child prove the life of the parent; by leading the latter to seek for consolation, where alone it can be had! And, oh! what a blessing, when, after wearying themselves seeking rest, and finding none, the eyes of the unhappy are opened to perceive the well of life, and their ears to hear the melodious sounds of that message, which calms the alarm occasioned by guilt, and soothes the sorrows of the afflicted sufferer. It is the Gospel alone which at once brings us to God, and as it were, restores to us our friends.

How dreadful the thought, when properly realized, that if bereaved unbelieving parents continue strangers to the power of the Gospel, they and their children are separated for ever. It is painful to

hear parents speaking in a *vague* manner, of the happiness of their beloved offspring, and to see them fondly cherishing the hope of meeting them again in heaven, while yet they are living in the careless neglect of the genuine Gospel of Christ, and are evidently governed by principles, which altogether unfit them for the celestial temple. Men cannot always be wholly unconcerned about a future state, and when bereaved of those who were dear to their hearts, and obliged to think of death and eternity, it is natural to wish to cherish the hope, that the departed may still be happy, and that at the close of life, they may meet them in the realms of bliss. There is a way of acting and speaking on this subject, which calls for no sacrifice, leads to no diminution of eagerness in earthy pursuits, and which, instead of exposing to the charge of fanaticism, is reckoned highly becoming, even by the world. They know, that they cannot be here for ever, and they are glad to think of heaven, as a reserve, when they *must* leave the earth. But how different that state of mind, which by faith, and hope, and fellowship with God, gives access to the blessedness of heaven, even while below !

What will it avail unbelievers, that their children are in heaven ? As the presence of Abraham there did not procure the admittance of his son, the rich man in the parable, so neither will the presence of the child there procure the admittance of his parent. Will it not be dreadful for parents to

see their children sitting in the kingdom of God, while "they themselves are shut out," notwithstanding of the hope which they fondly indulged, of meeting with them there.

On the other hand, how cheering to a Christian's heart is the well founded assurance, that though the earthly bond which joined him to his infant dead, is for ever broken, there is a bond which death never can dissolve! "They are not lost, but gone before." We and they shall yet meet to celebrate for ever, in delightful communion, the riches and the glories of redeeming love.

In that world the extent of the curse from which infants shall have been saved, will be well understood; and their grateful praises will ascend to "the throne of the heavenly grace."

"Babes thither caught from womb and breast,
Claim'd right to sing above the rest;
Because they found the happy shore,
They never saw nor sought before." *a*

Shall Rachel, then, yet weep and refuse to be comforted, because her children "are not." *b* Let her listen to the voice which assures her that "there is hope in their end," and that "her children shall come again from the land of the enemy," for "the last enemy Death shall be destroyed," and they shall come again from the grave "to their own

a Ralph Erskine's Gospel Sonnets.

b Jeremiah xxxi. 15—17. Matthew ii. 17, 18.

border," even to that country of which Canaan was a figure.

What a great proportion of the human race die in infancy, all of whom shall at last appear as the trophies of the Saviour's grace, as the purchase of his blood, and as the reward of his sorrows. To these will be added, all of every age and clime who were taught to know and to embrace that truth "which saves and sets the sinner free;" and in both classes "he will be glorified and admired." The voice of redeemed will be the voice of a great, even of an innumerable multitude, and "as the voice of many waters, and the noise of mighty thunders," saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." "Salvation to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

What an exalted view does this give of the plan of redemption! Here is a new creation infinitely surpassing the old, and a blessedness infinitely higher than that of the earthly paradise. How glorious to see the powers of darkness foiled with their own weapons, and upon their own ground! The greatest evil has become through the overruling providence of Heaven, the occasion of the greatest good. In the new creation there are features of the character of God exhibited which must otherwise have been hid, while on such of them as his other works serve to discover, there is thrown a high additional brilliancy.

In as far as the character of God was made known to Adam he bore its impress, and reflected its likeness. But there are parts of the Divine character revealed in Christ, of which he knew nothing; and since the redeemed are appointed to be conformed to the image of the Saviour, as "the first born among many brethren," they are destined to bear the moral likeness of God in a far higher degree than was done by Adam. In order that this exalted blessedness might be enjoyed, it was necessary that the Divine perfections should be exhibited to us in works, embodying the brightest illustration of their nature, and accordingly the entrance of sin has been followed by a most wonderful display of the whole attributes of Deity. In the work, mediation, and kingdom of Christ, there is a manifestation afforded of the infinite excellencies and glories of Jehovah, which gives the utmost scope to the faculties both of men and of angels, and which is fitted to raise them to the most exalted heights in their contemplations, devotions, and obedience. If the happiness of a rational creature arises from knowing and enjoying the Father of all bliss, it must of course be the higher in proportion to the fulness and perfection of that manifestation through which he is revealed. The greater the variety, grandeur, and harmony of glories which engage the heart, and the more vigorous its cleavings to God as the transporting object of its love, and the source and pattern of all that is ex-

cellent, the more exalted certainly must be the happiness enjoyed, and the more must the soul be fired with a holy ambition to be like to Him. Now, in the Gospel there is all that is capable of engrossing and captivating those faculties which fit for pursuing an object infinitely great and infinitely good. Here holiness and goodness, purity and love, justice and mercy, faithfulness and grace, are harmoniously blended. If, according to the original constitution established with Adam, his posterity, had he continued obedient, would have inherited immortal life in a paradisaical world, there is much more reason on the ground of the work of Christ, to look for new heavens and a new earth, in which the redeemed shall enjoy the blessedness of the celestial paradise, where in the effulgent light of the Divine glory, they shall be satisfied for ever with the likeness of God.

Through Him who hath conquered death, we have the hope of a glorious body which will fit us for the immediate vision of "the Majesty on high," a blessing for the enjoyment of which, the body even of Adam in innocence, was by no means adapted. It is the hope of such a body, that gives a glory to the life and incorruption which are brought to light through the Gospel. There is a *grandeur* about this plan of redemption, which may well make Christians to rejoice, that "if sin hath reigned over their infant offspring unto death, much more will grace reign through righteous-

ness unto their eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." By Him all obstructions to the exercise of grace have been honourably removed ; and now, therefore, the stream of the Divine bounty may continue freely to flow to the infinite display of that exuberant goodness, in which Jehovah exults on the glory of his character.

While the Christian rests his hope as a sinner, on the perfect atonement of the Saviour, his enjoyment instead of being damped as formerly, by the remembrance of God, is enlarged in proportion as he dwells upon his glory. His whole soul has a tone of humility and grandeur, of holiness and kindness, which cannot harmonize with the proud spirit of self-righteousness, the low maxims of the world, or the unhallowed spirit of rebellion. No longer is it merely his endeavour to keep within the limits of that kind and degree of wickedness, on which he vainly fancied that the vengeance of Heaven would never be poured.—No longer does he oppose the mercy of God to the perfection of his justice, for in the Gospel of peace he sees how God is at once just and merciful in perfection.—And feeling the ground on which he himself rests so secure, he can with confidence leave his children upon it.

Let the thought, then, of the blessedness of their departed infants, quicken the progress of Christians to the land of immortality, holiness and joy. Let them rest on that word, which is able to fill with

confidence and hope, even when descending the vale of the shadow of death, when like a ship unmooring from its anchor, they are about to launch into a world of spirits, when eternity is bursting on their view, and when called to that solemn meeting, which every individual must one day have with "Him whose eyes are a flame of fire," let them wait for that "happy, happy hour, when on bursting the veil of mortality," and entering into the celestial paradise, they shall find their infants in the bosom of Him, who hath graciously said, "of such is the kingdom of heaven."

A few short years of evil past,
We reach the happy shore;
Where death-divided friends, at last
Shall meet to part no more.



ERRATA.

- Page 32, line 9, for "conquent," read "consequent."
— 32, — 23, for "distruction," read "destruction."
— 36, — 11, for "real gratification," read "self gratification."
— 41, — 5, for "affected," read "effected."
— 42, — 17, for "no," read "on,"
— 66, — 10, after "raised," insert from line 11, "under," &c.
— 71, — 19, after "intrusted," insert from line 20, "both," &c.
— 90, 6 line from bottom for "am very unfond," read "very much dislike."
— 100, 5 lines from bottom, before "man," insert "no"
— 101, — 2, for "despensation," read "dispensation."
— 117, — 2, for "empress," read "impress."
— 167, — 14, for "it is," read "is it."
— 176, — 2, for "effect," read "affect."
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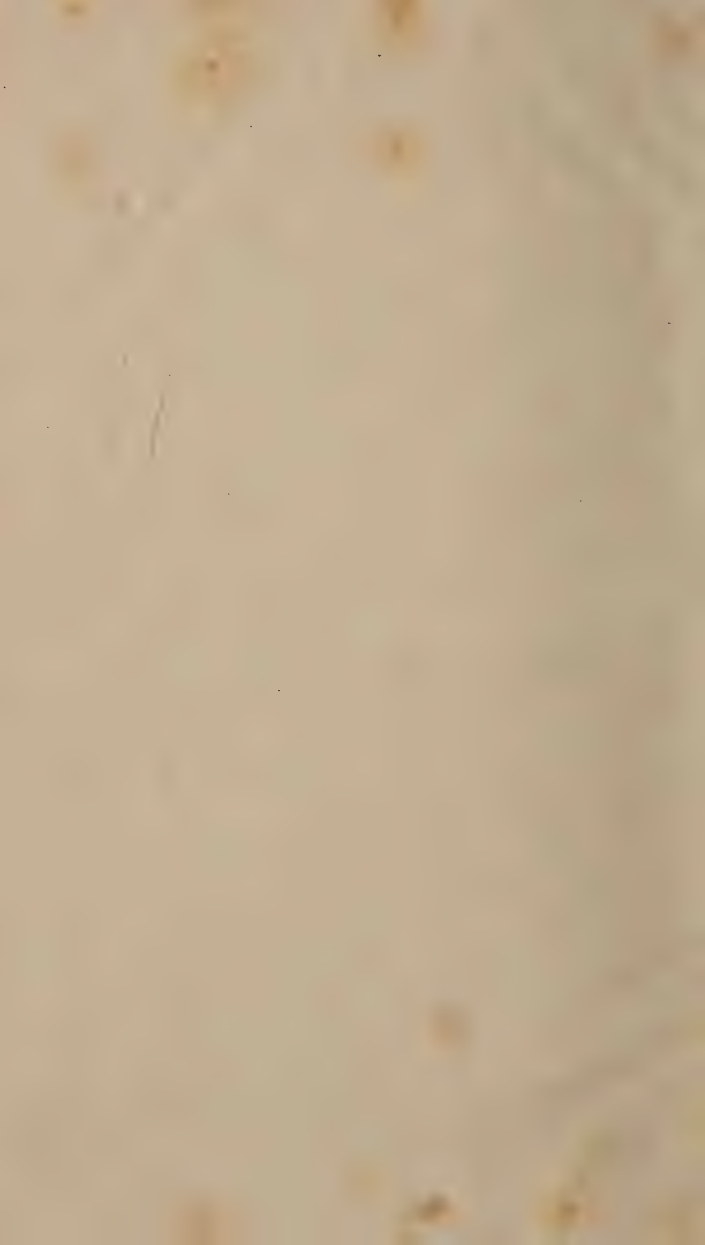
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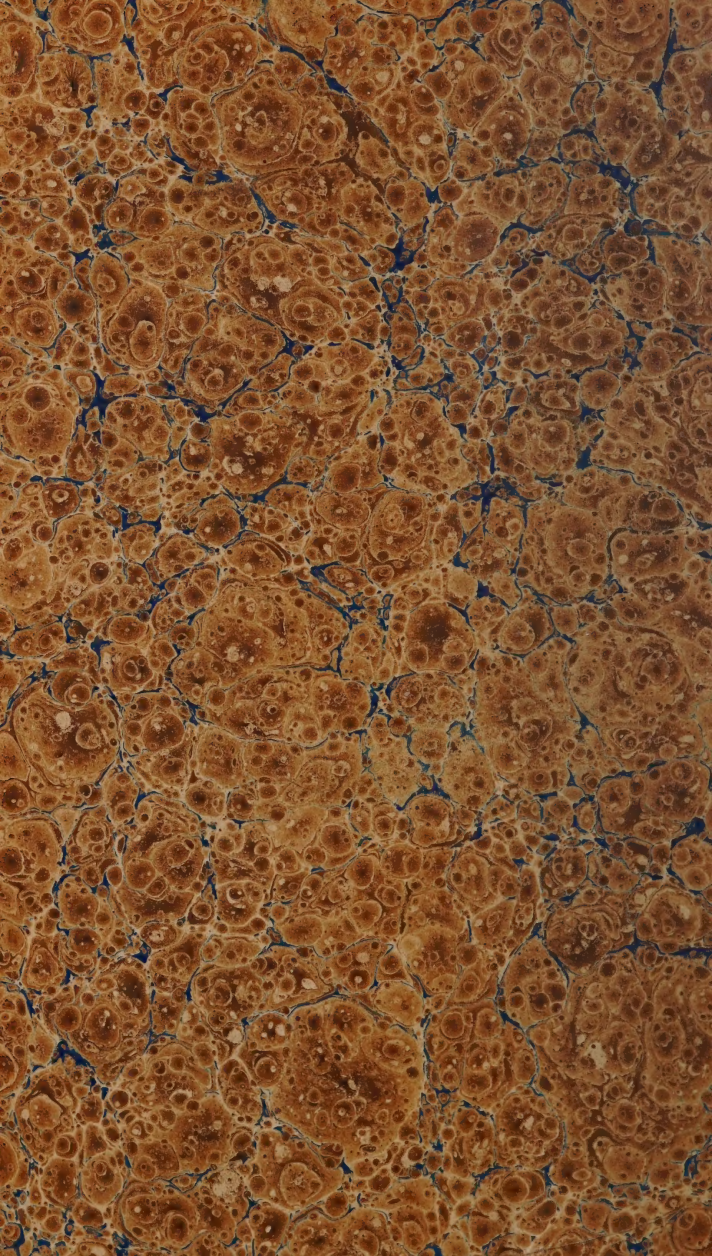
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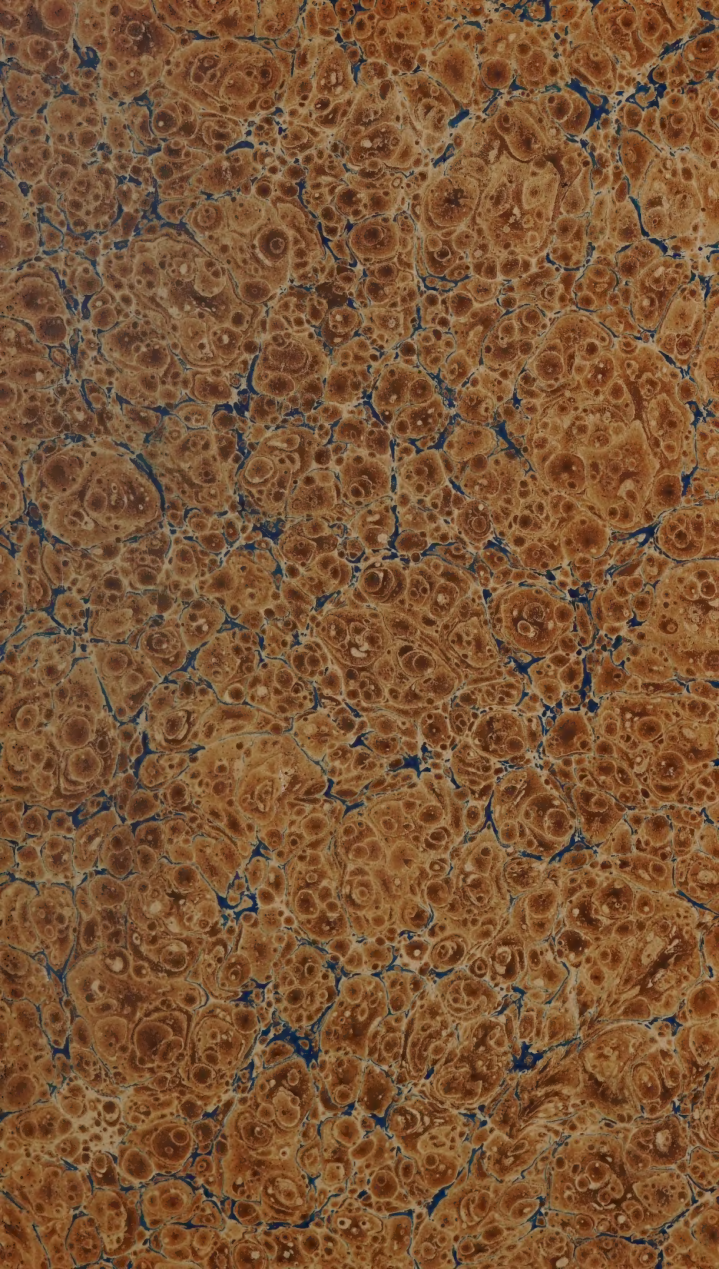
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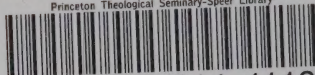








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